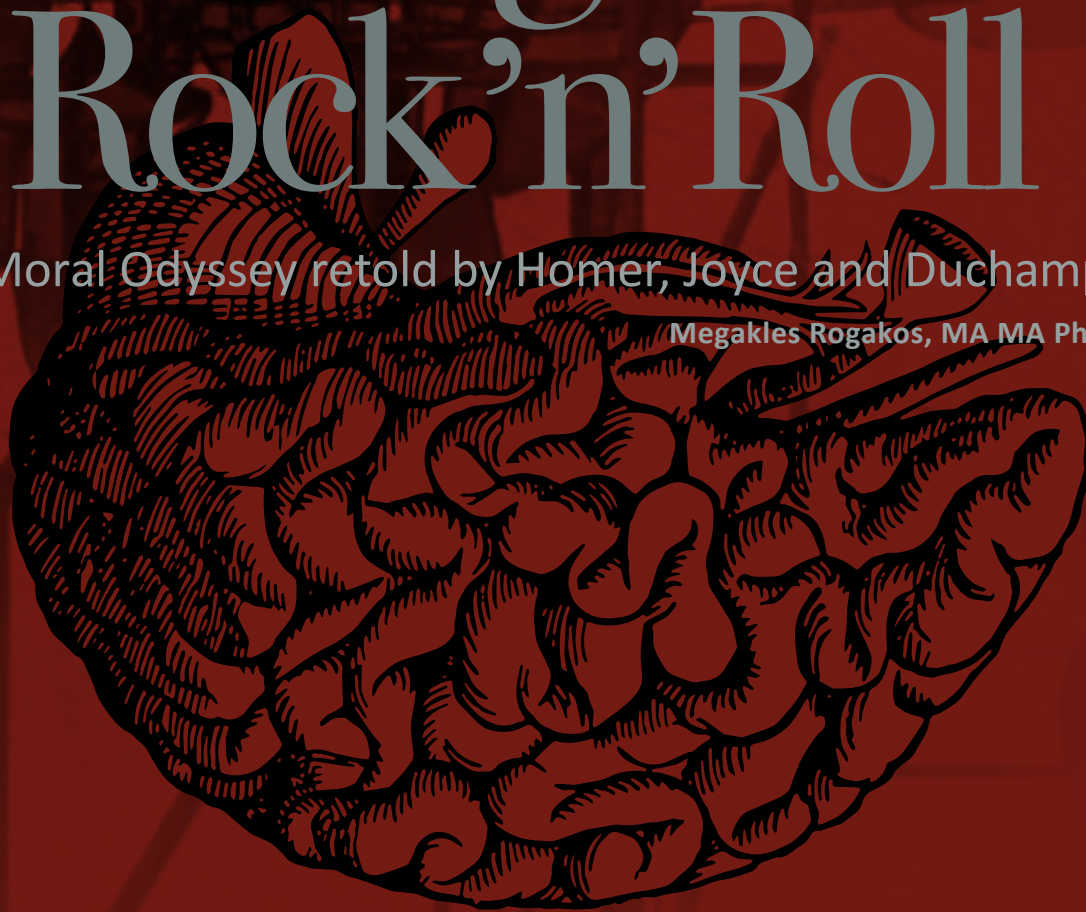


Sex Drugs & Rock'n'Roll

A Moral Odyssey retold by Homer, Joyce and Duchamp

Megakles Rogakos, MA MA PhD



THE

BOY

STRIKED

DOWN

BY HER

DAUGHTER

NAME



**Sex & Drugs & Rock'n'Roll
A moral Odyssey retold by Homer, Joyce and Duchamp**

Megakles Rogakos, MA MA PhD

Corfu Heritage Foundation - 2023

Future generations can do no less than systematically retrace the path of Duchamp's method and scrupulously describe its meanderings, in search of the hidden treasure that was his mind.

André Breton, "Anthology of Black Humour", 1997:278

The present book is based on the thesis entitled
"A Joycean Exegesis of *The Large Glass*: Homeric Traces in the Postmodernism of Marcel Duchamp"
that its author originally submitted for his degree of PhD at
the Department of Philosophy & Art History, University of Essex, in October 2016.

A copy of this album is kept at the National Library of Greece,
Vallianeo Megaron, 32 Panepistimiou Street, 10679 Athens, Greece, +30 210 3382 541, www.nlg.gr.

Catalogue data in the National Library of Greece

Corfu Heritage Foundation

1. Homer - James Joyce - Marcel Duchamp

2. The Odyssey - Ulysses - The Large Glass

Dissertation of Philosophy & Art History

Ancient, Modern & Contemporary Artists - Criticism & Interpretation

ISBN 978-960-296-407-1

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Designed by DesignBond,

17 Seilistrias Street, 15772 Zografou, Greece, +30 210 7480 665, info@designbond.gr.

Printed on acid-free paper in 500 copies in Greek and 500 copies in English by Zabelis - Corfu Printshop,
Agios Ioannis, 49100 Corfu, Greece, +30 26610 80120, info@zabelis.com.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Adcock, Linda – English Text Copy Editor

Capodistria, Elias – Corfu Heritage Foundation, Trustee

Gkotsi, Aleka – DesignBond, Manager

Kalokyris, Dimitris – Greek Text Copy Editor

Tritsis, Macis – DesignBond, Designer

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Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Summary	5
A Joycean Exegesis of <i>The Large Glass</i> : Homeric Traces in the Postmodernism of Marcel Duchamp	6
Introduction	8
I. The Premise	10-70
1 The Greek Dimension of Marcel Duchamp's <i>raison d'être</i>	12
2 The Allure of the <i>Odyssey</i> for the Avant-Garde	19
3 The 'Pataphysical connection of Alfred Jarry's <i>Faustroll</i> to Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>	22
4 Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> as paradigm of Raymond Roussel's <i>Impressions of Africa</i>	29
5 The Homer-Infested Modern Culture that influenced Marcel Duchamp	37
6 Duchamp's Postmodernism	56
7 A Joycean Exegesis of <i>The Large Glass</i>	65
II. Homeric Traces in the Postmodern Works of Duchamp	72-138
1 Homer's relation to <i>The Blind Man</i>	74
2 Duchamp as <i>Odysseus</i>	78
3 Duchamp's Odyssean Strategy of Dissimulation	82
4 Transvestism's Allure for Duchamp	84
5 Duchamp as <i>Penelope</i> : Loving, Mournful and Cold-Hearted	86
6 Duchamp's <i>His Twine</i> as Penelope's <i>Weaving Ruse</i>	91
7 Duchamp's <i>Belle Haleine</i> as the <i>Beautiful Helen of Troy</i>	94
8 The Multifarious Origins of <i>Tiré à quatre épingles</i>	98
9 Duchamp's <i>Hat Rack</i> as Emblem of Cuckoldry	103
10 Duchamp's <i>Knight</i> as the <i>Wooden Horse</i>	105
11 Duchamp's <i>Fountain</i> as the <i>Bag of Winds</i>	110
12 Duchamp's <i>Bilboquet</i> as <i>Nausicaä throwing the Ball</i>	112
13 The Ominous Power of Duchamp's <i>Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?</i>	115
14 <i>Odysseus and the Marchand du sel: In Advance of the Broken Arm as the Winnowing Fan</i>	118
15 The Enigma of Duchamp's <i>Door for Gradiva</i>	123
16 The Cassandra Connection – The Myth and the Foundation	127
17 Souvenirs from the Classical World	136
III. A Homeric Exegesis of Duchamp's <i>Glass</i> via Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i>	140-203
1 Duchamp's <i>Glass</i> and its Relation to Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>	142
2 The Components of the <i>Glass</i> as a matter of fact and by extension	146
3 The <i>Journey of the Illuminating Gas</i> as an <i>Odyssey</i>	152
4 This is a Man's World But it would be Nothing without a Woman	155
5 The <i>Bride</i> as <i>Penelope</i>	159
6 Duchamp's <i>Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries</i> as <i>Penelope's Suitors</i>	164
7 Duchamp's <i>Waterfall</i> as the <i>Melanhydros Spring, Ithaca</i>	168
8 Duchamp's <i>Liqueur Bénédicte</i> as the <i>Sirens</i>	171
9 Duchamp's <i>Chocolate Grinder</i> as the <i>Lust of Flesh</i>	176
10 Duchamp's <i>Oculist Witnesses</i> as the <i>Trial of the Bow</i>	180
11 Duchamp's <i>Mandala</i> as <i>Tiresias</i>	187
12 Duchamp's the <i>Boxing Match</i> as the <i>Odysseus vs Irus Fight</i>	192
13 Duchamp's <i>Wilson-Lincoln Effect</i> as the <i>Athena vs Poseidon Contest</i>	196
14 The <i>Odyssey's Anagnorismos</i> as Duchamp's Affirmative Nature – Yes, but to what?	198
15 The <i>Glass</i> ' Cracking as the <i>Odyssey's Unhappy Premonition</i>	202
Bibliography	208
Index	213

Note for the Reader: This study uses Richmond Lattimore's translations of Homer's *Iliad* (1951) and *Odyssey* (1965) because they are as precise, eloquent and technically close to the sense and idiom of the original as possible.

Technical Note: Double quotation marks are used for direct quotes. Words in foreign languages are italicised. Given the importance of homophonous puns, it is necessary to write the French words; in such cases, the English translation follows in brackets. Titles of works appear in italic style and their dimensions are given in centimetres in the following order – height before width before depth.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who have helped me during the preparation of this study towards its completion. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Dawn Ades, for her endless support over the course of this work, for giving me the freedom to find my own way and for channelling my scattered thoughts in the right direction. Second, I would like to thank my two examiners, Dr Michael R. Taylor, Chief Curator of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and Dr Michael Tymkiw, Lecturer in Art History and Co-Director of the Centre for Curatorial Studies at the University of Essex, for contributing to my study based on their great knowledge of Duchamp. Then, I would like to thank my supervisory board members at the University of Essex, School of Philosophy and Art History, Dr Mat Lodder and Dr Caspar Pearson, for their comments and advice on the arguments of this study. My special thanks go to Nicholas Garthwaite who proofread my study in preparation for its publication. I am also grateful to the A.G. Leventis Foundation for the academic grant to pursue my research and to the University of Essex for travel grants to further my research in the Duchamp Archive at Villiers-sous-Grez, France, the Bibliothèque Kandinsky - Centre Pompidou and the Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where the respective staff were most helpful. I am also deeply thankful to Dr John S. Bailey, President of the Attica Tradition Educational Foundation, for his mentorship over the years. Likewise, I thank Dr Katerina Thomas, Dean of the Frances Rich School of Fine and Performing Arts at Deree - The American College of Greece, for her support. Special thanks are due to Mr Antoine Monnier, President of Association Marcel Duchamp, France, whose kindness made working on the Duchamp Archive possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to the following people who were instrumental in the completion of my research – Mr Carlos Basualdo, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, for making available to me material about the work of Duchamp and his brothers; Mr François Taillade, Director of Association Le Cyclop, for guiding me through Tinguely's *Cyclops* in Milly-la-Forêt, France; Mr Anthony Atlas, Archivist at the William N. Copley Estate, New York, for enabling me to access James Metcalf's *The Torch of Cassandra*; Ms Jana Shenefield, Director of Archives at the Niki Charitable Art Foundation, Santee CA, for providing me with access to Niki de Saint Phalle's *A Dream Longer Than the Night*; Mrs Xenia Kaldara, President of the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation, for her permission to use the visual from *The Trojan Women*; Professor Sarat Maharaj, Malmö Art Academy and Lund University, Sweden, for sharing with me his expertise on the work of Richard Hamilton, Marcel Duchamp and James Joyce; Professor Nanos Valaoritis, San Francisco State University, who shared with me his memories of meeting Duchamp in Athens in 1960; Professor Patrice Queréel, President of the Fondation Marcel Duchamp, France, for communicating to me information about Duchamp's formative years in Rouen; Professor Edmund P. Cueva, University of Houston-Downtown, for offering information on Jesuit education in France; Dr Jill Fell for informing me about Jarry's writing style; Professor Christopher J. Rowe, Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham University, for his guidance regarding Plato's dialogues; Dr Antony Makrinos, Department of Greek and Latin at University College London, for his translation of the relevant comment by Eustathius of Thessalonica; Dr Nikos Mathioudakis, Scientific Consultant at Kazantzakis Publications, Athens, for providing me with references regarding the sacred number 3; Professor Rainer Friedrich, Dalhousie University, for contributing the source of Paul de Man's Homer-related quote. I am also filled with gratitude to the following professionals for providing me with information on Duchamp's works – Ms Cara Manes, Collection Specialist at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, on *To Be Looked at*; and Mr Rudolf Herz on the *Bilboquet*. In addition, I would also like to express my gratitude to the following professionals for providing me with information on specific Homer-related works – Ms Marie-Cécile Forest, Director of the Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris, on Gustave Moreau; Dr Sophie Biass-Fabiani, Curator at the Musée Rodin, Paris, on Auguste Rodin; Dr Nina Zimmer, Deputy Director of Kunstmuseum Basel, on Arnold Böcklin; Ms Katharine Eustace, Trustee of the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, on Antonio Canova; Professor Horst Uhr, Wayne State University in Detroit, on Lovis Corinth; Ms Joëlle Potvin, Research Department, Musée Matisse, Nice, on Henri Matisse; Mr Paul Chimera, Publicity Director of the original Dali Museum of Beachwood, Ohio, on Salvador Dali; Mrs Martine Gautot, President of Fondation Paul Delvaux, St Idesbald, on Paul Delvaux; Ms Patricia Ann DeChiara, Director of Academic Affairs at Yale School of Art, on Guy Fleming; Mr George Saumarez Smith, Adam Architects, on Alexander Stoddart. Finally, I would like to thank the following professionals who significantly contributed to my study – Dr Paul B. Franklin, editor-in-chief of *Étant donné Marcel Duchamp*, for his guidance through Duchamp's estate; Professor Panayiotis Vouzis, National and Kapodistrian University

of Athens, for an analysis of the Homeric epics; Dr Haris Vlavianos, Deree - The American College of Greece, for an appreciation of Homeric archetypes; Dr Evi Vogiatzaki, Hellenic Open University, for explaining the role of Cassandra in Joyce's *Ulysses*; Dr Eleftherios Anevlavis, translator in Greek of Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Wake*, for explaining the role of Cassandra in Joycean terms; Mr Dimitris Kalokyris for an appreciation of the modern literary avant-garde; Dr Effie Rentzou, Fellow in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University, for guiding me through Nicolas Calas' works; Mr Thieri Foulc, Proveditor of the Collège de 'Pataphysique, Paris, for enlightening me about Gil Chevalier; Mr Scott Krafft, Special Collections Curator of Northwestern University Library in Evanston, for permitting the reproduction of Joyce's drawing of Bloom; Dr Maria Georgopoulou, Director of the Gennadius Library - American School of Classical Studies at Athens, for offering me access to the Heinrich Schliemann Papers; Dr Joachim Heiden of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens, for making available to me material from the Wilhelm Dörpfeld Archive; Dr Stella Chryssoulaki, Hellenic Ministry of Culture Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attica, for giving me permission to reproduce the Piraeus *Statue of Athena Parthenos*; Ms Wesley Paine, Director of the *Nashville Parthenon*, for providing me with information about its west pediment sculptures of Athena and Poseidon; Dr Claudio Parisi Presicce, Director of the Musei Capitolini, Rome, for making accessible to me the *Statue of Attis*; Mr Michael Turner, Senior Curator of the Nicholson Museum, Sydney, for providing me with information about *Eros Enagonios*; Mr Constantinos Doukas for sharing with me his research on the Melanhydros Spring of ancient Ithaca; Professor Derek Gillman, Chairman of Impressionist & Modern Art at Christie's New York, for providing me with information about works relating to my subject; Mr Epameinondas Spiliotopoulos, President of The Archaeological Society at Athens, for providing with me with access to *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*; Dr Aikaterini Polymerou-Kamilaki, Former Director of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, for drawing my attention to George A. Megas' article "Practices after Death"; Mr Bruno Racine, President of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, for providing me with access to Alfred Jarry's *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, 'Pataphysician*; Ms Nancy Spector, Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, for enlightening me about Alexander Archipenko's *The Boxing*; Dr Anthony Ossa-Richardson for bringing to my attention Jane Ellen Harrison's article on the "Mystica Vannus lacchi"; Mr Neil Handley, Curator of the British Optical Association Museum at The College of Optometrists, London, for underlining the significance of the Astigmatic Fan Chart; Professor Andrea Schenker-Wicki, Rektor of the University of Basel, for giving me permission to appropriate plates of Vesalianum's *Fabrica*; Dr Maddalena Disch, Fondazione Giulio e Anna Paolini, for providing me with the *Tema Celeste's* cover of 1992; Mrs Dora Spachi, former President of the Association of Greek Tourist Guides, for identifying Timoleon Dimopoulos in the photograph of Duchamp's visit to the Acropolis of Athens; Mr Philippe Chrobocinski for helping me in France in various ways; Ms Effie Makri, TelInt RTD, for creating the digital graph rendering the frequency of Homeric epics' references in the arts; Mr Panagiotis Dasygenis, Vellios School of Art and Mr Pavlos Krontiras, Excogis, for offering their aid with information technology; Mrs Karen Phillipps for her guidance in promoting the book; Dr Antigone M. Nounou, Department of Philosophy & History of Science, University of Athens, for her good counsel; Dr Jorge Fernando Mesa for his fertile support. Above all, however, I would like to thank my Greek parents, Mr Spyros Nicolaou and Mrs Lila Angelidou and English relatives, Count Spiro Flamburiari and Countess Milly Flamburiari, for being there for me through this Odyssey. This study is dedicated to all of the above.

Summary

This study examines Marcel Duchamp's *The Large Glass* in relation to Homer's *Odyssey* and by extension to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. It focuses on the idea that Duchamp may have had in mind Penelope and her Suitors when he was creating the Bride and her Bachelors. The aim of the study is threefold – to clarify a problematic area in avant-garde art by restoring the important role the *Odyssey* played in modern culture as evidenced by preceding and contemporary artists; to detect possible Homeric traces on the *Glass* as such, but also by exploring references to Homer in related works by Duchamp; finally to compare the *Glass* with *Ulysses*, which seems to be as convoluted in its relation to the *Odyssey*. The study is correspondingly divided into three parts. The first places Duchamp in a broader culture that is directly influenced by the Classics and Homer's *Odyssey*. The second sets out to explore possible references to Homer in seminal works of Duchamp, which reveal that he discreetly based his working method and conceptual rationale on the appropriation of tradition. The final part deals with the ways in which specific aspects of the *Glass* may be critically interpreted as Homeric in origin. Throughout the study runs a comparison of the *Glass* with *Ulysses*, which exemplifies how safe Homeric attributions may be bent by appropriation to serve their authors' ends. This study is primarily theoretical and thematic, attempting to piece together perhaps a better understanding than before of one of 20th century's most seminal artistic figures and elusive bodies of work. Thus, the *Glass* may turn out to be in the same vein as traditional morality plays about archetypal issues with which human nature grapples eternally – sex (see III.9) and drugs (III.8) and rock'n'roll (III.12). As such, the *Glass* may enigmatically emerge as a Homeric paradigm of man's initiation to inner freedom, which Duchamp called the "beauty of indifference".

A Joycean Exegesis of *The Large Glass*: Homeric Traces in the Postmodernism of Marcel Duchamp

In 2023, a century after its completion, Duchamp's *Glass* remains an enigmatic and ambiguous work of art that repels conventional interpretation. This study aims to unravel its multifaceted layers based on the possible scenario that Duchamp deliberately revisited Homer's *Odyssey* in prophetically postmodern terms based on his lifelong fascination for literature, chess and eroticism. Considering the fact that, during Modernism, European culture, especially in France, was imbued with Homeric tradition, it is not all that surprising that the *Glass* should be influenced by it. From the outset, this study is not proposing the aforementioned scenario as an exclusive reading of the *Glass*, but adding to existing ones a hitherto lacking perspective. In this instance, the Greek word *exegesis* is preferred with reference to the critical explanation of a visual work that is intrinsically linked with literature.

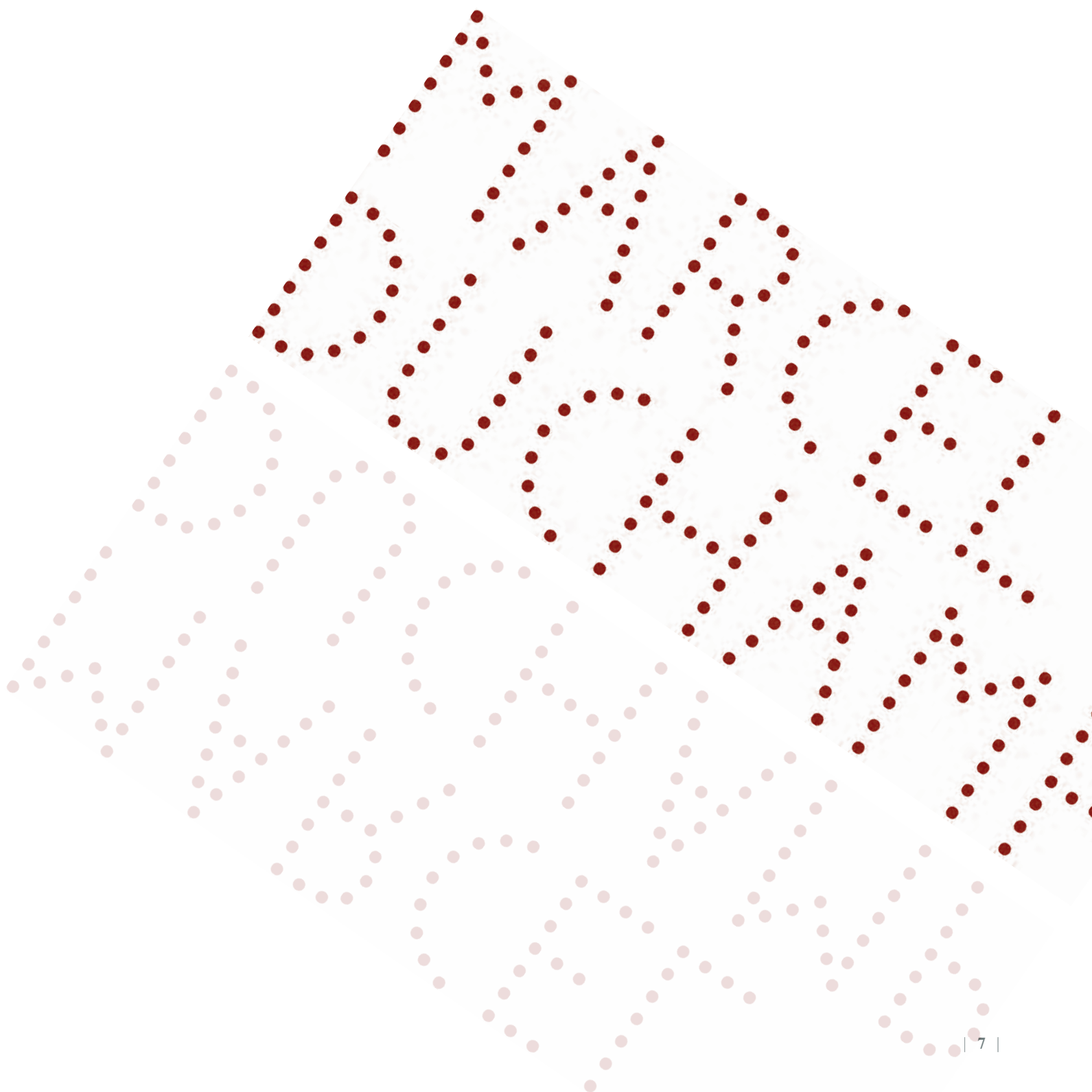
The first part of this study explores the conditions that helped formulate the Duchampian *raison d'être*. Initially, it investigates the classical grounds, especially Platonism and Scepticism, on which Duchamp based his ground-breaking rationale, with an emphasis on his education at the Lycée Pierre Corneille. Then it researches two important case studies of avant-garde literature that were to significant degrees and in various ways influenced by Homer's *Odyssey*. The first case is Alfred Jarry's 'pataphysical novel *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, 'Pataphysician*, which connects by oblique yet secure means to the *Odyssey*. The second is Raymond Roussel's surrealist novel *Impressions of Africa*, which resembles the *Odyssey* and even refers to it. Subsequently, the study investigates the *Odyssey*-infested culture in which Duchamp grew and during which he lived. Case studies are works near and during the time that the *Glass* was created, which draw their inspiration from the *Odyssey*. This latter investigation, then, explores the foundation on which the *Glass* is likely to have been created. Finally, the study explores two aspects of the Duchamp phenomenon as cited in the title – first his Postmodernism that helped encrypt his work's Homeric references and second the Joycean exegesis which, with reference to *Ulysses*, aims to serve as a parallel paradigm of the *Odyssey's* appropriation. Interestingly, Ornella Volta, President of la Fondation Erik Satie, Paris, was the first and sole scholar to make an interdisciplinary comparison between Joyce's Molly/Penelope and Duchamp's Bride as contemporary paradigms of womanhood.

The second part of this study engages with Homeric traces in the Postmodernism of Duchamp. In lieu of factual evidence that the *Glass* and the *Odyssey* are related, a careful selection of Duchampian subjects, themes and works are compared to Homeric equivalents – Homer's relation to *The Blind Man*; Duchamp's life as the *Odyssey*; Duchamp's Odyssean strategy of dissimulation; Transvestism's allure for Duchamp; Duchamp as Penelope, loving, mournful and cold-hearted; Duchamp's *His Twine* as Penelope's *weaving ruse*; Duchamp's *Belle Haleine* as the *Beautiful Helen of Troy*; the multifarious origins of Duchamp's *Tiré à Quatre Épingles*; Duchamp's *Hat Rack* as emblem of cuckoldry; Duchamp's *Knight* as the *Wooden Horse*; Duchamp's *Fountain* as the *Bag of Winds*; Duchamp's *Bilboquet* as *Nausicaä throwing the Ball*; the ominous power of Duchamp's *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?*; Duchamp's *In Advance of the Broken Arm* as the *Winnowing Fan*; the enigma of Duchamp's *Door for Gradiva*; the Cassandra connection between the myth and the foundation. Finally, this part looks at Duchamp's souvenirs from the classical world – his visit to Athens in 1960, during which he met with Nanos Valaoritis (1921-2019) and the photograph Baruchello took of him in front of a colossal *Siren* in the Sacro Bosco dei Mostri di Bomarzo, Italy, in 1964.

The third part of this study is an overall examination of the *Glass* and its possible relation to Homer's *Odyssey* and by extension to Joyce's *Ulysses*. A highlight of the argument is the view of Marilyn Katz, the first known academic to refer from the literary viewpoint to a conceptual relation between Homer's Penelope and Duchamp's Bride, yet without reference to Joyce. Initially, the *Odyssey* is compared with the *Glass* in terms of narrative and formal qualities. Subsequently, every element that constitutes the *Glass* is analysed in detail sequentially, based on the notes that its author meant its viewers to read. Subsequently, crucial elements of the *Glass* are re-examined in a way that suggests their conscious relation to Homer's *Odyssey* – the *Journey of the Illuminating Gas* as an *Odyssey*; the *Horizon* as circumstantial of Homeric gender segmentation; Duchamp's *Bride* as *Penelope*; Duchamp's *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries* as *Penelope's Suitors*; Duchamp's *Waterfall* as the *Melanhydros Spring*, Ithaca; Duchamp's *Liqueur Bénédicte* as the *Sirens*; Duchamp's *Chocolate Grinder* as lust of flesh; Duchamp's *Oculist Witnesses* as the *Trial of the Bow*; Duchamp's *Mandala* as *Tiresias*; Duchamp's *The Boxing Match* as *Odysseus vs Irus*; Duchamp's *Wilson-Lincoln Effect* as *Athena vs Poseidon*; The *Odyssey's anagnorismos* as Duchamp's affirmative nature; the *Glass's* cracking as the *Odyssey's* unhappy premonition. At every aforementioned chapter effort is made to elucidate the possible affinity of the *Glass* to Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is an equally extraordinary take on the *Odyssey* with likewise cryptic references to it.

This study aims to confirm the atavistic theory that the ancient is present through to the contemporary. Actually Duchamp's *Glass*, like Homer's *Odyssey*, as revisited in Joyce's *Ulysses*, may be thought to be some kind of moralising treatise on the temptations of man to fall prey to the three deadliest sins throughout

human history – lust of flesh; indulgence in drugs; fall to violence, as discussed separately in respective chapters (see III.9; III.8; III.12). In Duchamp's work, however, the reversion to Homer seems to be too oblique to be apparent. It appears that the *Glass* is one of these great works, which follow from Homer as morality stories, providing their beholders with ethical guidance through allegory. If its Joycean exegesis is proven, then the *Glass* may enigmatically emerge as a Homeric paradigm of man's initiation to inner freedom, which Duchamp called the "beauty of indifference".

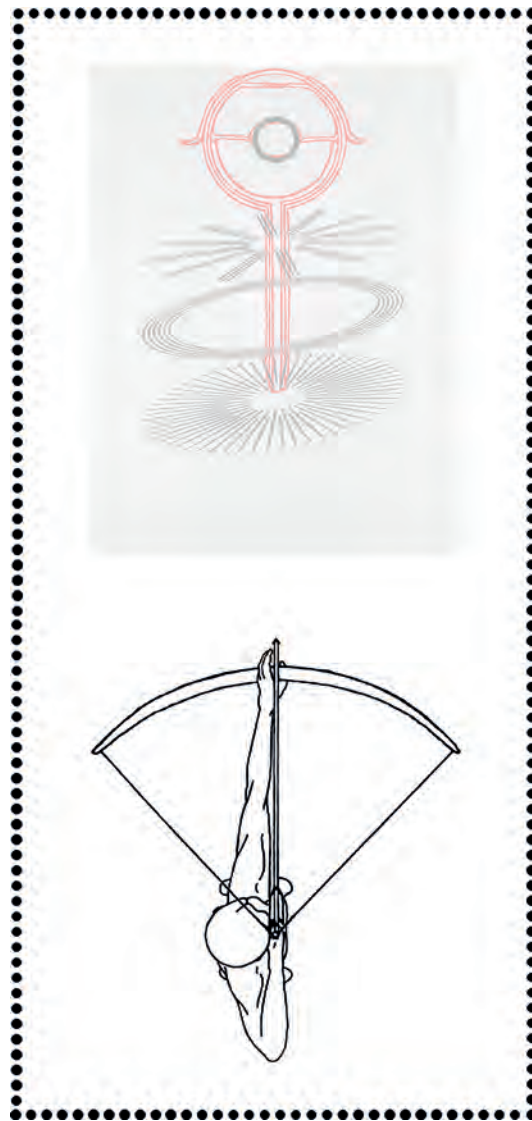


Introduction

Marcel Duchamp's *The Large Glass* is a very complex and highly enigmatic work. In the centenary of the *Glass*' official completion, in 1923, scholars have attempted to interpret its meaning and managed to elucidate various aspects of it.

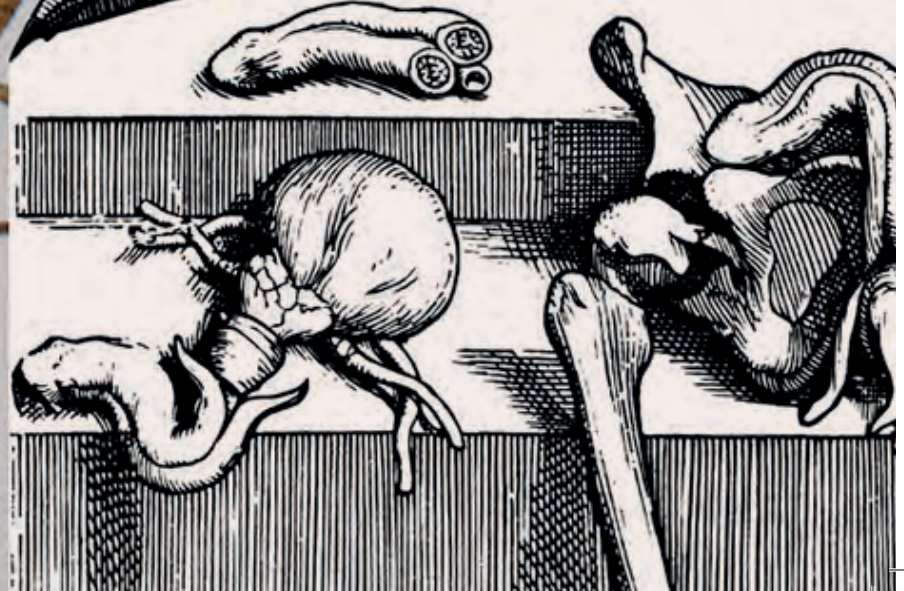
The epiphany that prompted the present attempt to unravel its enigma based on Homer's epics owes its origin to a small yet significant detail of the *Glass* – Duchamp's meticulous and accurate design for the *Oculist Witnesses*, through which the Bachelors' desires for the Bride must pass perfectly aligned in order to win her. Such a metaphysical challenge could be paralleled only by one prior instance in world mythology – the *Trial of the Bow* in which Odysseus succeeded in order to reclaim wife, state and selfhood. With this conviction in mind, the present study aims of substantiating a hitherto unheard of claim, that Duchamp's Postmodernism is actually an appropriation of the oldest extant work of Western literature – Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The study's task was challenged by the fact that Duchamp never cited Homer as a source of inspiration for his work. Therefore, the whole claim had to be based on well-founded speculation. The research began with the roots of the *Glass*: the Greek dimension of Marcel Duchamp's *raison d'être*; the relation to Homer of the two main sources of inspiration that Duchamp admitted – Jarry's *Faustroll* and Roussel's *Impressions of Africa* and the Homer-infested cultural context of its time (see part I). Having investigated Homer's role in the modern culture that Duchamp grew up in and experienced, the study focuses on the Homeric traces on a selection of his works (see part II) and the Joycean exegesis of the *Glass* based on Joyce's *Ulysses* (see part III). Though the original claim may never be absolutely proven, this study gathers as many arguments in its favour as possible.



Vesalius' *Oculus* (1543a) on Duchamp's *Oculist Witnesses* (1920) as Homer's *Trial of the Bow*, 2000. Digital collage by the author.







The Premise

I

I.1

The Greek Dimension of Marcel Duchamp's *raison d'être*

Marcel Duchamp is acknowledged as an artist who changed art so radically that a distinctly new artistic period began with his advent. There is no doubt that he introduced conceptualism and iconoclasm into art. These notions, however, are not as parthenogenetic as they appear to be, for they are rooted in ancient wisdom, with which Duchamp not only seems to be familiar but is also in personal agreement. He seems to have that quality of perception, the “historical sense . . . not only of pastness of the past but of its presence” (Eliot 1932:4), in the words of T. S. Eliot that appear in his 1917 essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. This quality seems so relevant to Duchamp; indeed, he referred to this Eliot essay in his 1957 lecture, *The Creative Act*, in his address at a symposium, which convened at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art on 20 March 1961. He said, “To imagine the future, we should perhaps start from the more or less recent past” (Duchamp 1975:27). The present chapter aims to show that some key ideas of Duchamp's work, which form his *raison d'être* (in its literal sense of reason for being), are based as much on Platonic philosophy as ancient Greek scepticism.

Duchamp is a notorious iconoclast, assertively rejecting cherished beliefs and institutions or established values and practices. The notion of iconoclasm, however, converges with the origins of ancient Greek philosophy. But Duchamp's relation to classical Greek literature and philosophy has not yet been substantially explored; and even though hardly any references to the Classics emerge in his published writing and correspondence, it is worth drawing attention to how a selection of his works resonate with ancient Greek thought.

The secondary education that Duchamp received in the period 1897-1904 at the Lycée Pierre Corneille, Rouen, is of great significance. Situated at 4 Rue de Malévrier, on the edge of the medieval city, this school was founded in 1593 in the buildings that Cardinal Charles de Bourbon (1523-1590) erected and entrusted to the Jesuits. In the knowledge that they were expelled from France in 1594, 1605 and 1762 and had lost any control of the curriculum, Professor Edmund P. Cueva suggested that by the time Duchamp studied at this school only a little Jesuit influence was present. Some remnants of the Jesuit authority perhaps remained, but instruction had shifted from the *ratio studiorum* and *litterae humaniores* to the sciences. Apparently, the school offered an excellent level of education, which would enable its graduates to preserve if not further the classical heritage. Corneille, Corot, Delacroix, Flaubert and Maupassant are among the well-known alumni of this system and Simone de Beauvoir probably was its most illustrious professor (Butler-Bowden 2013:49).

For the purposes of this project, the Lycée Corneille's period archives would be extremely important. However, Mme Blaise-Marie Groult, responsible for collections and scientific development of this archive at the Departmental Archive of the Seine-Maritime region, reported that the bulk of material (agendas, programmes and course contents) was destroyed in the Second World War and there is no evidence that can answer key questions for the desired period. One of the sources through which to investigate the school's curriculum at the time is *Marcel Duchamp: Work and Life / Ephémérides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy, 1887-1968*, Gough-Cooper and Caumont's momentous publication that unfolds a day-by-day account of the artist's life. In it is found that throughout his studentship, the teaching of literature, which featured Greek, Latin and French writers, was emphasised over teaching by other faculties.

It is important to look at the content of these courses of literature at the Lycée Corneille. Duchamp grew up in the Third French Republic, at a time when formal education was compulsory for children aged between 6 and 12. The Jules Ferry laws on free, mandatory and secular public education, passed in 1881 and 1882, were one of the first signs of the State's secular control of public education over Catholic schooling. At primary and secondary levels, the curriculum was the same for all French students in any educational institution. Official education still promulgated a curriculum founded on classical standards, being the tradition that had been developed by scholars at universities, schools and seminaries over centuries. It is certain that students of a former Jesuit School, like the Lycée Corneille, regardless of the reduction of the clergy's role that the Ferry laws introduced, read great works of Western literature by such literary heroes as Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Virgil, Dante, Chaucer and Shakespeare. It is important to note that Homer's poetry was taught at school because it was thought to provide ideal models of persuasive speaking and writing that were worth emulating. In her essay, *What is Classical Education?*, American author Dr Susan Wise Bauer wrote, “The reading of the *Odyssey* leads the student into the consideration of Greek history, the nature of heroism, the development of the epic and man's understanding of the divine” (Wise Bauer 2003). Such characteristics were sought after by institutional education at the time and it was to defeat these that literary revolutionaries like Jarry, Apollinaire and Joyce strove.

Although the influence of the *Odyssey* on Duchamp will be dealt with at length later, at this stage it is worth citing Marc Décimo's observation, after examining Duchamp's home library, that most of the books are

dated after the 1940s, while some of those few, dated before 1920, certainly derive from the library of his wife, Teeny (Décimo 2002:130). The fact that Duchamp's library included a French translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (*ib.* 2002:108), but not Homer's *Odyssey* and likewise contained a copy of Raymond Roussel's *The Understudy* (*ib.* 2002:143), but not his *Impressions of Africa*, which strongly impressed Duchamp, may mean, as Paola Magi claims, that "Duchamp didn't want to keep the books that inspired his works" (Magi 2011:59). The additional fact that Duchamp never mentioned the *Odyssey* may also underline Magi's conviction that Duchamp never cited the readings that influenced him (*ib.* 2011:58).

Platonic Influences in Duchamp's Work and Rationale

The fact that, on 21 July 1903, Duchamp was faced with the *Dialogue between Socrates and Crito* at his Baccalauréat oral examination, suggests that Plato's texts featured prominently enough in Parodi's courses. Coincidentally, Parodi's name appears also to be a pun-nickname, considering the plethora of *parody* contained in Plato's work. Be that as it may, Plato was not just forced upon Duchamp by his education's curriculum. In his Note 71r, Duchamp mentions Plato alongside other philosophers in whom he was interested – "At the head of the text as recommendation (similar to those signed by Pascal or Plato or Ecclesiastes) write in the form of a business / legislation letter: In response to your respected of... short... etc" (Matisse 1983:45). This note is obviously a thought Duchamp had about the making of one of his radical works. At the same time, however, it reveals familiarity even with the formalities concerning these philosophers' works. Much later in life, a quote from Plato in his *Philebus* came to Duchamp's mind in relation to the experience of Alexander Calder's *mobiles* (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:145). What is more, responding to Robert Lebel's book *Blackmail of Beauty* of 1955, Duchamp wrote to him from East Hampton, New York, on 4 August 1955 as follows, "Received *Chantage*, which I read the way I read Plato i.e. very fast. Nevertheless, much of it has managed to stick to my grey matter." (Naumann 2000:346). Such a rare statement citing Plato is significant because it reveals that Duchamp had been reading the ancient philosopher's writings with speed, which suggests interest and facility – if not also a subconscious familiarity. More significantly, however, though Duchamp mentions Plato, he hardly ever explains the extent to which he was influenced by Platonic ideas. Therefore, it is worth exploring how seminal Platonic texts relate to Duchamp's work and thinking.

The Relation of Plato's *Symposium* to Duchamp's *Rose Sélavy* of 1921

Plato's *Symposium* is a philosophical text dated c. 385-380 BC. It is perhaps his best-known and most influential work, concerned with the genesis, purpose and nature of *eros* (love). *Eros* refers to a particularly intense attachment and desire in general. Most commonly, however, it is applied to passionate love and desire, initially sexual and to the god who personifies that state (*Symposium* 1989:xiii). It is, actually, a remarkable fact that the *Symposium*, the first explicit discussion of love in Western literature and philosophy, begins as a discussion of carnal and particularly homoerotic love, before it eventually concludes as a discourse on the spiritual desire of *Kalon* (Beauty). In fact, these two features of the *Symposium* – physical and spiritual love – are interconnected as stages of a rising gradient. In ancient Greece, the culture of inter-male relationships, more often than not, had educational, developmental and ethical dimensions as primary concerns, which Plato took over and developed in abstract directions, dictated by his theoretical philosophical views (*ib.* 1989:xiv).

The crucial progress of love from one stage to the other is described in Socrates' speech, which recounts Diotima's views on *eros*. She was a priestess from Mantinea, who was Socrates' teacher in matters of love. She said that love specifically is the desire "to give birth in beauty" (*ib.* 1989:206B). "All of us", she claimed, "are pregnant... both in body and in soul and as soon as we come to a certain age, we naturally desire to give birth" (*ib.* 1989:206C). This desire to reproduce, which is also a desire for immortality (*ib.* 1989:206E-207A), may involve physical offspring, glory, or good deeds in general – anything that springs from the individual, but stays behind after the individual's death. Socrates reports that everything she had said about love up to this point, far from exhausting the topic, constituted only the means and stepping-stones for something else, "the final and highest mystery" of love (*ib.* 1989:210A). And she warned him that, though she will try to explain that mystery to him, he may not be capable of being initiated into it. Diotima describes a kind of 'ascent' of love, a passing from the physical to the spiritual (*ib.* 1989:210A-D). A lover first falls in love with a beautiful body, which inspires him to give birth to beautiful ideas. The lover then sees that the beauty of the soul is nobler than the beauty of bodies. In looking for such ideas of beauty, the lover comes to realise that the activities and laws that such ideas express are themselves beautiful in their own right and will devote himself to them instead to beauty per se. But these activities and laws, in turn, depend upon knowledge and the lover now becomes attached to nothing less than *philosophia* (love of wisdom). But even *philosophia*, Diotima continues, is not the final stage of this ascent. Emphasising the novelty and

the controversial nature of what is about to be told, she now reveals that if a lover has gone about things correctly, he will at some point “all of a sudden” see “the reason for all his earlier labours” (*ib.* 1989:210E). This reason, for the sake of which everything else has been undertaken, is *Kalon* (Beauty) itself, that which makes everything else beautiful and the ultimate object of all *eros*, according to Plato’s highly revisionary and bold view (*ib.* 1989:xxi). This ‘Form’ of Beauty is pure, unchanging and beautiful in every way, not to be seen with the eyes of the body and separate from all things that derive their beauty from it (*ib.* 1989:xxii). This highest form of love is the desire for immortality, for wisdom and for the contemplation of an object that is not in any way bodily or physical. It is perhaps such a Beauty that is evoked in the secluded setting of Duchamp’s *Étant donnés* of 1946-1966.



Francis Picabia
(France, 1879-1953).
The Cacodylic Eye, 1921.
Oil with photomontage and
collage on canvas, 149 x 117.
Paris, FR: Centre Pompidou,
Musée National d'Art Moderne.

In 1921 Duchamp boldly chose the alias *Rose Sélavy*, as a female alter ego, with which he signed the aided readymade *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (see II.13) of the same year. The common Jewish name Rose is an anagram of *eros*, suggesting to Duchamp the broader word play *éros c'est la vie* (*eros*, that's life). Much later, in his conversation with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp spoke proudly only about this alias' developed form, doubling the initial 'r,' thus yielding another pun, which, without anagrammatism, made *Rose* actually sound like *éros* because the initial *R* would be pronounced in French like the initial *é* in *éros* – “In effect, I wanted to change my identity and the first idea that came to me was to take a Jewish name. I was a Catholic and it was a change to go from one religion to another! I didn't find a Jewish name that I especially liked, or that tempted me and suddenly I had an idea: why not change sex? It was much simpler. So, the name *Rose Sélavy* came from that. Nowadays, this may be all very well – names change with the times – but *Rose* was an awful name in 1920. The double R comes from Picabia's painting, you know, *The Cacodylic Eye*, which is at the *Boeuf sur le Toit* cabaret; I don't know if it's been sold – it's the one Picabia asked all his friends to sign. I don't remember how I signed it – it was photographed, so someone knows. I think I put 'Pi Qu'habilla Rose Sélavy' (in fact, it reads “[Fr] en 6 [Pi] qu'habilla Rose Sélavy”) – the word 'arrose' demands two R's, so I was attracted to the second R. All of this was wordplay” (Cabanne 1971:64-65). The phrase Duchamp wrote on Picabia's painting sounds phonetically like “Francis Picabia l'arrose c'est la vie”. This broadens the meaning from *éros c'est la vie* to the phrase *arroser la vie* (make a toast to life). Both puns

refer to Duchamp's view of *eros* in relation to life – the first expressing a philosophical equation rooted in Diotima's teaching; the latter, a mundane wish for the recovery and convalescence of his friend suffering from an eye ailment. What is of significance is that, in contemplating a pseudonym for his feminine alter ego, Duchamp chose his alias to refer to *eros* as the quintessence of life. This crucial choice underlined the importance he attached to eroticism. Duchamp had said in a 1959 BBC interview, “Eroticism is a subject very dear to me and I certainly applied this liking, this love, to my *Glass*. In fact, I thought the only excuse for doing anything is to introduce eroticism in life” (Hamilton & Hamilton 1959).

It is worth noting that the notion of *eros* had preoccupied the two famous psychologists – Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung. In his 1925 paper *The Resistances to Psycho-Analysis*, Freud explains that the psychoanalytic concept of sexual energy is more in line with the Platonic view of *eros*, as the desire to create life (Freud 1925:163). By *eros*, Jung meant a principle of psychic relatedness in human activities, associated with the *anima* (Jung 1951:14). The *Symposium* must have appealed to Duchamp for the same reason. Plato succeeded in convincing generations of readers that his idea of love is not simply a wild philosophical fantasy, but rather an ideal, according to which life can be lived. This biographical dimension of *eros* is in keeping with Duchamp's principles. His lasting work is not so much the material art he left behind, but rather his example in life. However, further than the emphasis on *eros* as a philosophical aspiration in life, even the conclusion of Duchamp's *Glass* – that sex is an endlessly frustrating process – seems also to originate in the *Symposium*. Concentrating on the nature of *eros*, the speech of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*, for all its comic elements, frequently strikes a sad note – the goal of loving, the forging of one person out of two, is not to be achieved. What we have instead is the temporary satisfaction of sexual relationships and these are, at best, a promise of a more permanent happiness and a closer union (*Symposium* 1989:x). It seems that Duchamp was aware of *eros*' vanity when he said in a 1963 filmed interview, “The artist should be alone ... Everyone for himself, as in a shipwreck” (Drot 1963).

The Relation of Plato's *Republic* to Duchamp's *Cast Shadows* of 1918

The *Republic* is a Socratic dialogue, written by Plato around 380 BC, concerning the definition of justice, the order and character of the just city-state and the just man. The focus is on Socrates' idea that reality is unavailable to those who use their senses. Thus, Socrates became a philosopher at odds with the

average person and common sense. Socrates said that he who sees with his eyes is blind; this idea is most famously captured in his allegory of the cave (*Republic* 1968:7.514a-7.521a), which is considered one of the most important passages in Western philosophy. There Socrates argued that the invisible world is the most intelligible and the visible world is the least knowable and most obscure. Socrates explained that the philosopher is like a prisoner who is freed from a cave and comes to understand that the shadows that he formerly made out on the cave's wall from the outer world do not make up reality at all, as he alone is able to perceive the true form of reality and himself. Socrates then wondered, "Would he [the seeing philosopher] not say with Homer, 'Better to be the poor servant of a poor master' and to endure anything, rather than think as they [blind prisoners] do and live after their manner?" (*ib.* 1968:7.516d). Socrates insinuated a famous passage in Homer's *Odyssey* in which the ghost of the great hero Achilles, when asked if he is not proud of the fame his deeds have spread throughout the world, answers, "I would rather follow the plough as thrall to another / man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on, / than be a king over all the perished dead" (Lattimore 1965:11.489-491).



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Cast Shadows*, 1918 New York. Silver print on paper, 6 x 4. Villiers-sous-Grez, France: Collection Alexina Duchamp. | Richard Hamilton (England, 1922-2011). *The Oculist Witnesses Poster*, 1968. Lithograph with silver polyester on paper, 80 x 58. Villiers-sous-Grez, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives.

In Alfred Jarry's 1898 book *Faustroll*, which Duchamp and every notable avant-gardist of the time admired, Panmuphle narrated, "I gazed at the beings hoving into view from behind me, in the same way as did the watchers in the Platonic den" (Jarry 1965:32). Duchamp may well have had Plato's allegory of the cave in mind when he came up with the idea of making a picture using shadows. In a note collected in *The Green Box* of 1934, he expressed a desire to see the "shadows cast by 2.3.4. Readymades. 'brought together'" to become a work of art (Duchamp 1969:55.90). The picture was to be executed "by means of luminous sources and by drawing the shadows on these planes, simply following the *real* outlines projected" (*ib.* 1969:85.136).

This intention was first evidenced in his photograph *Cast Shadows* of 1918, which records the dark shape produced by three readymades – a portion of *Bicycle Wheel* of 1913, the whole of *Hat Rack* of 1917 and *Sculpture for Travelling* of 1918 – positioned between rays of light and the wall surface. Duchamp's 1967 account of his procedure elaborated on the aforementioned note in *The Green Box* – "I had found a sort of projector which made shadows rather well enough and I projected each shadow, which I traced by hand onto the canvas." As a result, the photograph served as a basis for the painted shadows on *Tu m' (You [blank] Me)* of the same year. By presenting his readymades' pitiful irregular silhouettes, Duchamp may have intended to put the viewers in the position of the cave's blind prisoners. At the same time, the shadows are evocative of the other world of Ideas that, by Platonic standards, are real, true and good, which only a vision of another kind may reveal. This ability of Duchamp to see the invisible world of ideas with an inner

eye is eloquently suggested by Richard Hamilton's 1968 poster for Petersburg Press London. Duchamp is shown holding before him a large sheet of glass with the *Oculist Witnesses*, which Hamilton reconstructed as a separate important element of the *Glass*, for inspection before the artist signed it. The real sight through the spectacles of his two eyes, seems to be replaced by insight springing from the face's centre through the upper oculist chart, composed of 12 radiating triple rays.

The Relation of Plato's *Apology* to Duchamp's *Silence, Delay and Indifference*

The *Apology* is Plato's version of the speech Socrates gave as he defended himself in 399 BC against the Athenian Council's charges that he "is an evil-doer and corrupter of the youth, who does not receive the gods whom the state receives, but introduces other new divinities" (*Apology* 1871:24b). This sophists' accusation of Socrates recalls the *Art News*' attack of 1965 on the Duchampian legacy. In *J'Accuse Marcel Duchamp*, Thomas Hess attempted to criticise Duchamp's influence on U.S. art as pederastic, "he tries to turn himself into a masterpiece and through his example, has often been a corrupter of youth" (Hess 1965:53). Without claiming to be Socrates, Duchamp is evoked like him in the *Apology*. In response to Chaerephon's enquiry at the oracle of Delphi, if there was any man wiser than Socrates, the Pythian prophetess answered in the negative (*Apology* 1871:21a). Astounded by such a response, since he denied any such eminence for himself, Socrates went on a divine mission to find someone wiser than himself among politicians, poets and artisans. As a result, Socrates found that the politicians had "pretensions to wisdom" (*Apology* 1871:21d), the poets "are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them" (*ib.* 1871:22c) and the artisans "knew all sorts of high matters and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom" (*ib.* 1871:22d). Therefore, Socrates concluded, "God only is wise; and by this answer he intends to show that the wisdom of men is worth little or nothing [...] He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth nothing." (*ib.* 1871:23b). The interpretation of the oracle's answer might be that Socrates is wiser than any of the others because he is aware of his own ignorance, while the others are not.



Joseph Beuys
(Germany, 1921-1986).
Marcel Duchamp's Silence is Overrated, 1964.
Oil, ink, felt, chocolate and
photography on paper, 157 x 178 x 2.
Bedburg-Hau, DE: Museum Schloss
Moyland.

Socrates' wisest phrase also happens to be his most enigmatic – "About myself I knew that I know nothing" (*ib.* 1871:22d). The Socratic ignorance, which is its own kind of wisdom, not to know but rather to know that one does not know, is a case of unwisdom. Duchamp too appears to be aware, as Socrates says he is, of his own failure to be as the 'blind' establishment expects. In the BBC 1959 interview, Duchamp coined the sobriquet "anartist" for himself, a pun on anarchist, while dismissing the term 'antiartist' as indicative of aggression. The term 'anart', a composite featuring the prefix *a* (Greek for negation), suggests an 'underground' mode of art that stands for conceptual rather than aesthetic creation – an unconventional idea of art that includes the readymade. It describes the essence of his entire output, his own sceptical reaction of inner calm towards mainstream production of art. For such a novelty, the academic establishment would accuse Duchamp like Socrates – "they say; this villainous misleader of youth! and then if somebody asks them, Why, what evil does he practise or teach? They do not know and cannot tell; but in order that they may not appear to be at a loss, they repeat the readymade charges" (*ib.* 1871:23d).

Socrates' famous admission, "I know that I have no wisdom, small or great" (*ib.* 1871:21b), concerns the paradoxical fact that a man who claims to be ignorant is actually wise. Such a Socratic paradox resembles Duchamp's idiosyncrasy, as opposed to the norm, to utilise *silence*, *indifference* and *delay* as productive principles. In conversation with Denis de Rougemont in 1945, Duchamp predicted, "But all our efforts of the future will be to invent, as a reaction against what is happening now, silence, slowness and solitude" (Rougemont 1968:43). Still, even an emerging revolutionary such as Joseph Beuys, who reportedly held him in high esteem, reproached Duchamp with his 1964 action picture *Marcel Duchamp's Silence is Overrated*. Looking back, however, it seems that Duchamp gained the lasting effect of Socratic wisdom.

Socrates, very much like Homer, remains a legendary persona. Despite having written nothing, his speeches, preserved second-hand through his disciples, have laid the foundations of how classical philosophy is conceived. He exerted great influence also on leading avant-garde artists of the time of Duchamp. In 1919 Erik Satie composed *Socrates* as a symphonic drama in three parts for female voices and a small orchestra on a libretto composed of excerpts of Victor Cousin's translation of Plato's dialogues referring to Socrates. Constantin Brancusi, close friend of Duchamp, created his sculpture *Socrates* in 1922, representing the upper part of his body with an ascent of two successively larger and cross-directional thorough holes, suggestive of his penetrating wisdom. Socrates adamantly insisted that he was *not a teacher* and refused all

his life to take money for what he did (*Apology* 1871:33a-b). Rather, he helped others, namely Meno, Plato and Theaetetus, thus seamlessly contributing the maximum to the philosophy of mankind.

Likewise, Duchamp also had a disregard for the material things of life and was indifferent to the marketplace, though in America he attracted wealthy patrons who supported him throughout his middle years. He too became a spiritual father for a new generation of *enfants terribles* that included John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Eva Hesse, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and Jean Tinguely, to name but a few. For these and subsequent similarly versed artists Duchampian art symbolises the result of the knowledge that is neither affirmation nor negation but indifference. Nobel laureate Octavio Paz aptly described such an exceptional liberal approach as “mad wisdom” (Paz 1978:90). Therefore, it seems that whether knowingly or unknowingly, Duchamp was following the Socratic paradigm.

Classical Influence on Duchamp’s notion of *la beauté de l’indifférence*

Duchamp revealed to Arturo Schwarz that “when he had been a librarian at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, he had gone through the works of the Greek philosophers and found that he most appreciated the attitude of Pyrrho and the Sceptics as being closest to his own” (Schwarz 1969:33). As Professor Robert N. Bellah claimed, the roots of modern scepticism are to be found even in the context of the writings of Plato (de Duve 1992:7). Philosophical scepticism is a school of thought that asserts nothing and generally questions attitudes towards knowledge, opinions and beliefs stated as facts, or doubts claims that are taken for granted. Sceptics may even doubt the reliability of their own senses. The school’s founder, Pyrrho of Elis (c. 390-270 BC), like Socrates, left no writings and knowledge of his thoughts is owed to his disciple, Timon of Phlius, by means of other subsequent authors – Eusebius via Aristocles. Pyrrho lived in poverty and was a painter before being attracted to philosophy. He studied the writings of Democritus, attended the lectures of Bryson and attached himself closely to Anaxarchus, joining him in the expedition of Alexander the Great to India.

Back in Greece he was frustrated with the assertions of the dogmatists, who claimed to possess knowledge and founded a new school in which he taught *fallibilism*, namely that every object of human knowledge involves uncertainty. Thus, he asserted that certain knowledge on any subject was unattainable and that the great object of man ought to be to lead a virtuous life. He was convinced that nothing in life is in itself real or fake, true or false, or good or evil. Only probability, opinion, custom and law make things appear so. As a consequence, Pyrrho aimed at *aphasia* (speechlessness) with suspension of judgment, *ataraxia* (imperturbability) with suppression of action and *hesychia* (quietude) with calm acceptance of things as they are without attempts to resist or change them. Pyrrho saw in scepticism the escape from the calamities of life and the road to happiness. During the greater part of his life, he lived in solitude and endeavoured to render himself independent of all external circumstances, undisturbed by fear, or joy, or grief and indifferent to pleasure or pain. Epicurus, though not ascribing to scepticism, admired Pyrrho because he recommended and practised the kind of self-control that fostered inner calm; this, for Epicurus, was the end of all physical and moral science. So highly was Pyrrho valued by his fellow-citizens that they made him their high priest and erected a monument to him after his death.

Professor Victor Brochard made the following remark about sceptical philosophers, “Doubt everything and be indifferent to everything, there is the whole of scepticism at the time of Pyrrho, just as subsequently” (Brochard 1959:54). This statement perfectly reflects Duchamp’s manner of living, who had a “doubt of everything” (Cabanne 1971:18). With a free spirit he accepted the powers of the unknown and the intervention of chance. Like a genuine Pyrrhonian, given that neither the sense impressions nor the intellect, nor both combined, is a sufficient means of knowing and conveying truth, Duchamp suspended judgement on dogmatic beliefs or anything non-evident. He can be seen as emulating Pyrrhonian humility, gentleness, tranquillity and humour. In fact, he called his version of scepticism *la beauté de l’indifférence*, that is the beauty of indifference (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30), which Paz considered to be another name for pure freedom (Paz 1978:134). Such a freedom requires that fantasy meets reality in the former’s terms – by delay, abstraction and self-reference (Siegel 1995:239).

Modern Scepticism’s influence on Duchamp’s 3 *Standard Stoppages* of 1913-1914

Whilst Duchamp accepted ancient scepticism as an ethical way to conduct his life, without the comfort of dogma or theoretical conviction, he was probably further influenced by modern scepticism, which was more subversive, in that it denied the grounds for believing that experience is any guide to the nature of reality at all. Professors of philosophy in Rouen, when Duchamp studied there, were influenced by René Descartes, the French philosopher of the 17th century (Patrice Quéréel’s letter to the author of 1 June 2014).



Constantin Brancusi
(Romania, 1876-1957).
Socrates, 1922.
Oak and limestone, 141 x 29 x 37.
New York, NY: The Museum of
Modern Art.

While accepting classical scepticism as general demolition of opinions, Cartesianism secured a “foundation [upon which to establish belief in] the sciences that was stable and likely to last” (Descartes 1988:17). Its method involved doubting everything in order to find whatever is beyond doubt. In the end Descartes came to think that at least one thing is beyond doubt; and that thing was doubt itself. Indeed, Descartes' attempt to apply the method of doubt to the existence of himself spawned the proof of his famous rationalistic dictum *cogito ergo sum*, which is Latin for “I think, therefore I am” (Descartes 1988:162). In a 1964 interview Duchamp admitted to Tomkins, “I, with my Cartesian mind, refused to accept anything, doubted everything.” (Tomkins 2013:64).



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
***3 Standard Stoppages*,**
1913-1914 Paris.
Wood, thread, canvas and
glass, 28 x 129 x 23.
New York, NY: The Museum of
Modern Art.

In accordance with modern scepticism, Duchamp shifted the method from real life experience to the artistic field. Though his readymades are the works par excellence that evidence the sufficiency of choice to define the scope of art, it is his *3 Standard Stoppages* of 1914 that provides the theoretical framework for his scepticism towards life as a whole. To make this work, Duchamp followed his note about chance in *The Box of 1914*, “If a straight horizontal thread one metre long falls from a height of one metre on to a horizontal plane twisting *as it pleases* and creates a new image of the unit of length” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:22). Duchamp repeated this action three times with different strings and highlighted the random results by fixing them on separate strips of glass and making wooden rulers out of them. This work was his response to the first consistent system of measurement-units put forward at an international level that the Metre Convention of the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (International Bureau of Weights and Measures)

and resulted in a diplomatic treaty signed by 51 nations on 20 May 1875. This treaty yielded seven base unit bars made of platinum and iridium, protected in the Pavillon de Breteuil in Sèvres, France. It was against this highest of dogmas that Duchamp chose to react, quite like the circumstance that inspired Pyrrho to teach fallibilism. Duchamp pointed out that this work is a record of *his* chance “casting a pataphysical doubt on the concept of a straight edge as being the shortest route from one point to another” (d’Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:274).

From all the above it is obvious that ancient Greek philosophy and its ramifications played a significant role in influencing Duchamp’s thought and, by extension, his broader frame of life and his enquiry as to what lay beyond physics. If select works of his seem to resonate with ancient Greek thought, his *Glass* could likewise have roots in antiquity relating it to the *Odyssey*.

The Allure of the *Odyssey* for the Avant-Garde

I.2

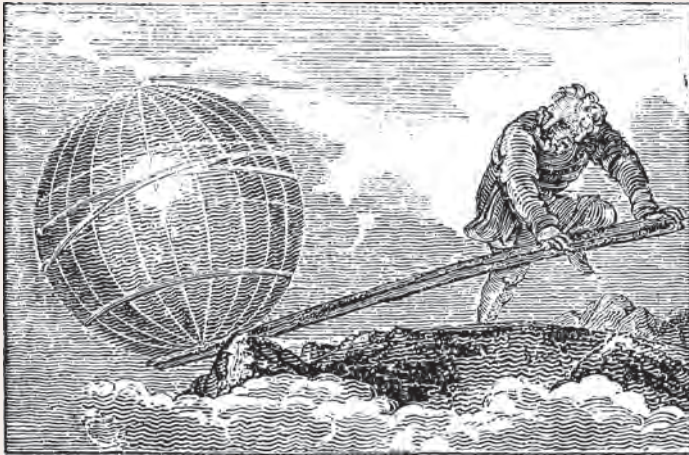
Arguably, Homer's epics shaped Western literature and thought by setting a standard against which to measure cultural excellence. In his last years, the great author Goethe (1749-1832) suffered from a sense of failure in his hope of becoming Germany's Homer, the writer of a foundational national epic, which he thought necessary for the cultural revival of his country (Mah 2003:83). Germany's historical adoration of the ideal 'Hellas' has from a modern viewpoint been known as "Greek tyranny over Germany" (Butler 1935:x). Eliza Marian Butler argued that the great German classicists had succumbed to the tyranny of an ideal, to the "devastating glory of the Greeks", as Friedrich Hölderlin phrased it (*ib.* 1935:ix). Evidential of this fact is a photograph of 1904 recording in the home of the German author Henry von Heiseler (1875-1928) a *tableau vivant* (living picture) most likely of the Parnassus, the dwelling place of Apollo and the Muses, according to classical myth. From left to right appear the revolutionary poet Stefan George (1868-1933) as Dante, the poet Maximilian Kronberger (1888-1904) as Ovid, an unknown man as Virgil, the author Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948) centrally as Homer and Friedrich Gundolf (1880-1931) as the blind bard's guide. The oppressive cultural power of the Classics must certainly have been felt by novelty-seeking thinkers, especially avant-gardists, anywhere in the West. The issue is that they chose Homer as a source of inspiration from which to advance their contemporary culture.



Richard F. Schmitz
(Germany, 1876-1950).
Stefan George as Dante, Maximilian Kronberger as Ovid, unknown man as Virgil, Karl Wolfskehl as Homer, Friedrich Gundolf as Homer's guide, in Henry von Heiseler's home, Munich, 14 February 1904.
Marbach am Neckar, DE: Deutsches Literaturarchiv.

The literary avant-garde of the early 20th century pre-eminently included great authors like Apollinaire, Eliot, Pound and Joyce, all of whom excelled especially in the period after the First World War, when the new conditions of peace inspired them to criticise tradition in extraordinary ways. The first happy coincidence Joyce noticed after his arrival in Paris was the fact that the leading cultural forces were interested in Homeric parallels. He wrote to his brother Stanislaus on 25 July 1920, "*Odyssey* very much in the air here. Anatole France is writing *Le Cyclope*, Gabriel Fauré the musician an opera *Pénélope*. Jean Giraudoux has written *Elpénor (Paddy Dignam)*. Guillaume Apollinaire *Les mamelles de Tirésias...*" (quoted in Ellmann 1959:490). These leading literary giants, without exception, appropriated Homeric themes or characters in their work to varying degrees. It is worth attempting an answer to the central question, why they chose to do so, while at the same time their main target was to revolutionise culture.

Characteristically, Guillaume Apollinaire, who knew Greek mythology so well, began his 1913 poem *Zone* with the line, "In the end you've had enough of the ancient world" (Lehman 2013:47), expressing his indignation at the fact that modernity was saturated with classical antiquity. Credited with adopting the term 'Cubism' (1911) and coining the terms 'Orphism' (1912) and 'Surrealism' (1917), it was clear that Apollinaire was interested in new movements. Arguably, to explore the new, one needs to sever the ties with the past. New tools – methods, syntax and vocabulary, best implement such a severance. However, although being attracted to novelty, he considered the reference to antiquity, as with *Tirésias*, necessary. Such a reference gave scope to his critical representation of the contemporary experience of capitalist society and commodity culture. Inspired by the myth of Tiresias, the blind seer of Thebes, famous for being transformed into a woman, the author inverted the story to produce a provocative interpretation with feminist and pacifist elements. His surrealist play told the story of Thérèse, who changes her sex to obtain power among men, with the aim of changing customs, subverting the past and establishing equality between the sexes. So, he enlisted an ancient personage to question contemporary bourgeois habits and conventions.



Anonymous (England).
Archimedes' Lever. Engraving on the cover of *Mechanic's Magazine*, vol. II, London, UK: Knight & Lacey, 1824. Courtesy of the Annenberg Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

to the world is comparable to Archimedes' lever.

Pre-classical Greek literature abounds with female-authored texts whose merit was recognised in the eventual male-dominated world, like the poetry of Sappho, or male-authored texts privileging the female, like Euripides' *Medea*. However, in works of classical times, such as Sophocles' *Antigone* or Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, woman was no longer a proud successor of a matriarchal past, but rather a product of patriarchy. Rejecting a long tradition of male-dominated literature, Apollinaire foresaw tendencies that required society to change. Duchamp belonged to the avant-garde advocates who challenged the concept of the classical Western canon. Owing to the contribution of avant-gardists such as Duchamp, there came a transition from patriarchy towards a balance of the genders. Eventually the avant-garde's critique developed into the polemic of multiculturalism that charges the classical canon with being influenced by racial, gender and other biases, while embracing the pre-classical ideals of open-minded diversity that tolerates otherness.



James Joyce
 (Ireland, 1882-1941).
Caricature of Leopold Bloom drawn in Myron C. Nutting's studio, 1926. Courtesy of Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library, Evanston, IL.

acknowledge lasting traces of matriarchy in Mycenaean Greece.

Nancy Felson-Rubin's approach to gender within the story and Penelope in particular credits Homer with challenging the prevailing gender ideology with his portrayals of women.

The Penelope who emerges by the end of the poem is a forceful figure who operates imaginatively within the constraints of her situation and succeeds in keeping her options open until she reaches safety in her husband's embrace. By presenting her triumph as the analogue of Odysseus' return, Homer challenges traditional views of a woman's place expressed within the poem by such characters as the suitors, Agamemnon and Telemachus. These views depict a wife as inferior and subservient to her husband, confined to certain activities in the household and excluded unquestionably from others. By contrast, Homer presents Arete, queen of Scheria, as a settler of men's quarrels and as the figure whom Odysseus must win over, if he wants safe convey [sic] home (cf. 6.310–315 and 7.74–77). Following Athena disguised as a local girl through the town, Odysseus is told to enter the palace and plead for mercy from the queen, Arete. This allocation of power to Arete [...] directly challenges Homer's listeners to reassess the role of wife and queen and thus, of Penelope. (Felson-Rubin 1994:vii).

The arguments of Felson-Rubin give a male Homer a feminine voice in challenging gender roles. This

Apollinaire's paradigm explains why and how Homer and things Homeric remained foundational for new developments in the arts. Besides, ancient scholarship had created a sound basis for ideas and structures in the arts and sciences upon which the whole Western epistemological edifice was founded and could not be altogether replaced. In other words, the modern avant-garde sought to bring about yet a new renaissance, one that would refer to the past, but, at the same time, be contemporary and reflect its age. As Professor Aby Warburg believed, "Every age has the renaissance of antiquity that it deserves." (Gombrich 1970:238). Anyone aspiring to change the world would do well to use this safe substructure as a springboard. This recalls Archimedes' dictum with respect to the lever principle, "Give me a place to stand on and I will move the Earth". (quoted in Pappus 1878:1060). The Odyssean wit that the avant-garde used to bring about the desired change

Especially, Homer's *Odyssey* seems to have appealed to the avant-garde for its viewpoint as pre-classical Greek literature, a gender-sensitive poem balancing between the sexes. This very long poem begins with the word *andra* (man), of which Joyce inscribed the whole of the first verse in the Greek original in his 1926 drawing that includes a caricature of Leopold Bloom. At the same time, however, the poem describes this man's adventures as aided by women. The *Odyssey* appears feminine in its narrative techniques, but also in its portrayal of women. The facts, as Samuel Butler claims, that the *Odyssey* passionately portrays women in charge, such as Athena, Arete, Calypso, Circe, Eurycleia, Helen, Nausicaä and Penelope (Butler 1922:107) or puts women first, such as in the description of the shades Odysseus saw in Hades (*ib.* 1922:109) and emphasises the domestic space seem to

would appeal to Duchamp, who was attracted to transvestism as a means by which to question artistic identity, challenge bourgeois conventions and break social or religious taboos (see II.4). A further reason that the *Odyssey* would appeal to Duchamp is the fact that it is immersed in intoxication (see III.8) and eroticism (see III.9), which became central subjects also in his own work.

In a world infested by Homer and things Homeric, where every great intellectual had his share in ancient Greece, even the iconoclastic Duchamp would be affected. Of course, in his work he was determined to break from traditional representation and forge new paths in art. But still, he would make only oblique and slippery, if not blasphemous and heretical references, to Greek antiquity in the sources of his work. What is more, not only did he avoid speaking or writing openly about such sources (Homer and his *Odyssey* are not documented in any of his writings or speeches), but he intentionally complicated access to them via layers of visual and verbal puns that would protect his work against easy or quick interpretation, like the Sphinx guarding her enigma. The only means by which to unravel the ancient Greek origins of his work is via backtracking clues like in *Ariadne's Thread*. Unlike Goethe who regretted not living up to the perceived classical greatness of Homer's accomplishments, Duchamp was reconciled with his limitless artistic means to revisit the classics in his highly subjective and unorthodox way that is irony and parody. Therefore, the study's first part investigates the *Odyssey*-infested Modernism that influenced Duchamp.

I.3

The 'Pataphysical connection of Alfred Jarry's *Faustroll* to Homer's *Odyssey*

It is normally assumed that a professional is influenced by peers in his field. Marcel Duchamp evidently broke this assumption. A towering man of letters, Octavio Paz took note of Duchamp's remark, "I felt that as a painter it was much better to be influenced by a writer than by another painter" (Paz 1978:11). He was actually very interested in French avant-garde literature and it has often been exemplified that this interest influenced his train of thought. Duchamp scholars Linda Henderson and Michael Taylor cited Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), one of the foremost authors of the Parisian avant-garde in the end of the 19th century, as a great source of his literary inspiration. As a matter of fact, the connection of Jarry's novel *Faustroll* of 1898 to Homer's *Odyssey* may be a strong influence on Duchamp's *Glass*. Below follows an analysis of this connection in terms of *Faustroll*'s both content and subject.

Jarry was an accomplished student of ancient Greek and had gained mastery over its modern development to such an extent that towards the end of his life he translated Emmanuel Rhoides' (1836-1904) controversial novel of 1866 *The Papess Joanne* (Fisher 2000:30). He was a member of the Symbolist group contributing to the periodical *Mercure de France*. He gained notoriety as the iconoclastic author of the satirical farce *Ubu Roi* (*Ubu King*), which caused a scandal in 1896. Behind his public persona, Jarry was deeply interested in the possibilities of science. In a 1903 article Jarry praised British scientist Lord Kelvin's (1824-1907) imaginative approach to science. Jarry would also have appreciated the openness of Crookes and Lodge to psychical research and even spiritualism (Henderson 1998:47). Jarry's term "Pataphysics" first appeared in print in the text of his play *Guignol* in the 28 April 1893 issue of *L'Écho de Paris*. However, it was in *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician: A Neo-Scientific Novel* (1898/1911) that pataphysics was defined as "the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments" (Jarry 1996:22). The first truly pataphysical text was the *Commentary to serve the Practical Construction of the Machine to explore Time*, which was signed "Dr Faustroll" (*Mercure de France*, 29 Feb. 1899:387-396). Jarry's text began with a Bergsonian discussion of time as succession and space as simultaneity, which included references to both four-dimensional spaces and non-Euclidean geometries of Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866) and Nikolai Lobachevsky (1792-1856). For Jarry and subsequently for Duchamp and other members of the avant-garde, these new developments in science and geometry could function as a subversive symbol for the rejection of tradition and established laws, as a means by which to challenge traditional positivism (Henderson 1998:47). Under the influence of Jarry, Duchamp explored what he described as "Playful Physics" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:49). In particular, pataphysics pointed the way to Duchamp's own practice of "slightly distending the laws of physics and chemistry" (*ib.* 1973:71).

Besides the influence of pataphysics on Duchamp, the content of Jarry's text seems to have provided him with an iconoclastic vocabulary as well. A comparison of Jarry's writings to Duchamp's works reveals that there is plenty of discreet correspondence between the two. The first word of *Ubu Roi*, *merdre* with an extra 'r' (*merde* is the French word for 'shit'), which seems to heighten the performance's obscenity in Paris at the time (1898), must have influenced Duchamp to double the same letter in his 1914 note "arrhe is to art as shitte is to shit" (*ib.* 1973:24) as well as his 1921 alter ego "Rrose Sélavy". The toilet-brush *Ubu Roi* held as a sceptre became the prominent feature that Duchamp used in *Tu m'* of 1918. The *gidouille*, a word that Jarry coined for his spiralling drawing on *Ubu's* belly, appeared first as a fine spiral in Duchamp's *Rotary Glass Plates* of 1920 and subsequently as variations of it in *Disks Bearing Spirals* of 1923. The morning bath that *Faustroll* took with "wallpaper painted by Maurice Denis" (Jarry 1965:7) is reminiscent of Duchamp's idea for a work, the "Reciprocal Readymade: Use a Rembrandt as an ironing board" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:32). The crystal globe that alters the dimension of *Faustroll* and the universe (Jarry 1965:25) resembles the magnifying lens that Duchamp used on *To Be Looked at* of 1918 and implied with the Mandala on the *Glass* (see III.11). The reference to "truth (being clear) to a blind man" in Plato's various passages (*ib.* 1965:28) resonates with *The Blind Man* journal that New York dadaïsts, including Duchamp, published in 1917. The reference to "gaz(ing) at the beings hovering into view from behind [like] watchers in the Platonic den" (*ib.* 1965:32) seems to relate to Duchamp's photograph *Cast Shadows* of 1918 (see p. 15). Jarry mentioned the *Chi-Hing* (*ib.* 1965:56), which is a near anagram of the *I-Ching*, in relation to the sage's happiness, whose *Divination Chart* must be amongst the influences for Duchamp's *Oculist Witnesses* (see III.10). The merry song about drinking (*ib.* 1965:58) echoes the drunkenness of Duchamp's *Bachelors* (see III.8). *Clinamen*, the automaton painting machine that ejaculates pigment onto academic canvases in the Luxembourg Museum (*ib.* 1965:89), resembles the toy canon that Duchamp used to fire painted matches onto the upper half of the *Glass*. As a matter of fact, Homer's poetical reference to the sea as *oinops*, literally wine-faced (Lattimore 1965:2.421; 5.221; 7.250; and 12.388) seems to have influenced *Clinamen* to paint

a “wine-lees coloured sky” (Jarry 1965:90). Jarry’s notorious mention of the *pissotière* (urinal) may have inspired Duchamp to create the readymade *Fountain* of 1917. Jarry’s proneness to refer to male genitals and their operation (*ib.* 1965:71, 88), which is analysed below, is shared by Duchamp with the *Chocolate Grinder* and the *Splash*. The opening of chapter 29 is headed by the “ha ha” epigram from the sceptic philosopher Pyrrho, whom Duchamp had studied and admired (Schwarz 1969:33). Faustroll’s admittance that the body is there to “support one’s clothes and through clothes one’s pockets” (Jarry 1965:102) resembles Duchamp’s conception that led to the *Nine Malic Moulds* of 1914-1915 (see III.6). Jarry’s references to his “centimetre, an authentic copy in brass of the traditional standard” may have prompted Duchamp to produce his *3 Standard Stoppages* of 1913-1914. Jarry also writes about finding “a substance with which to make a piece of glass” (*ib.* 1965:103), which resonates with Duchamp’s general idea about the *Glass*. The “Fragment of the Dialogue upon the Erotic” (*ib.* 1965:107) seems to be based on Plato’s *Symposium* and may have given additional reason for Duchamp to choose the name of his eros-based alter ego. Finally, Jarry’s *Faustroll* expressly acknowledges the role of his reader (*ib.* 1965:16) much in the way Duchamp meant to conceptualise the viewer as part of the *Glass*.

Having exposed the direct correspondences between the works of Jarry and Duchamp, it is worth focusing further on four particular points in *Faustroll* that relate to Duchamp’s general interests. Firstly, Jarry’s fixation with Plato. Having received first-class education by excellent teachers at the Lycée de Rennes from 1888 to 1891 (Brotchie 2011), Jarry was so versed in Platonic philosophy that he dedicated considerable space in *Faustroll* to juxtapose 6+33+3 affirmative responses of Socrates’ interlocutors in the original Greek from “Plato, in various passages” to Bosse-de-Nage’s sole uttered tautological monosyllable “Ha ha” (Jarry 1965:27; see p. 199). Though such a knowledge demonstrated the tyranny of an ideal, Jarry used it for rather ironic and somewhat comical effect, perhaps with a touch of sarcasm. Such an inventive solution must have impressed Duchamp to the point that he too would wish to appropriate Platonic ideas in a conceptually concealed fashion (see I.1).

Secondly, Jarry’s obsession with the triad in *Faustroll* – the doctor’s own age of 63; the three travelling companions; the $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$ *livres pairs* (equivalent books) (*ib.* 1965:10-11); the “tricolour” face of Bosse-de-Nage (*ib.* 1965:27); the 6+33+3 affirmative responses (*ib.* 1965:28-29); counting “by use of the figure 3” (*ib.* 1965:42); the “notion of the Holy Trinity [...] and all things triple [...], which commences at three” (*ib.* 1965:75); “the phallus, which is dactylically triple” (*ib.* 1965:109); special reference to the tripartite urinal (*ib.* 1965:76); the pantaphysical [sic] maxim that “God transcendent is trigonal [...] God immanent is trihedral” (*ib.* 1965:110); “There are three souls (cf. Plato)” (*ib.* 1965:110); “Symbolically God is signified by a triangle” (*ib.* 1965:111) – is also Homeric in origin and shared especially by Duchamp’s *Glass* (see III.1). As a matter of fact, Faustroll’s boat, travelling on “three steel rollers at the same level” (*ib.* 1965:17) may be a direct reference to the *Chocolate Grinder*’s triad of rollers. It is also interesting to note that the unity of the Holy Trinity is related to the boat in the absurd statement “...called *As* (French for ‘ace’), doubtless because it is constructed to carry three people” (*ib.* 1965:16). In one instance Jarry appears to be sceptical, if not blasphemous, in relation to the Holy Trinity. Arguably due to his distaste for it, no sooner does he mention the Holy Trinity than he turns to the urinal, accentuating its significance by avoiding its vulgar name – “And in his public life [Bosse-de-Nage] never understood the use, on the boulevards, of those iron kiosks whose popular name derives from the fact that they are divided into three triangular prisms and that one can use only one-third at a time” (*ib.* 1965:76). Of course, the original French term *pissotière* phonetically implies *pisse au tiers* (piss one third). This idea of relating the numinous with the blasphemous to the point of identification may have influenced Duchamp to deify the abject with his infamous readymade *Fountain* of 1917. It is also likely that Duchamp had in mind Jarry’s aforementioned blasphemy when, in 1961, he created *Anagram for Pierre de Massot*. Duchamp always reacted generously to requests for charitable contributions, whether for a cause or to help old friends in financial difficulties, as was the case with de Massot. He had previously offered him 14 puns for *The Wonderful Book: Reflections on Rose Sélavy* of 1924 and the cover for his 1959 book of poems entitled *Pulled at Four Pins*. This time, he contributed to auction a barely-known drawing of a street urinal and inscribed it on three areas in French, “de Ma Pissotierre j’aperçois Pierre de Massot” (from My Pissotierre I perceive Pierre de Massot). It could be an ironical picture for this Dada poet who that year spent several months in a sanatorium at Assy in the French Alps. Up until the 1940s, the iron-walled *pissotière* was a commonplace of Paris streets. It was a distinctive edifice raised prominently in public spaces for the urinary convenience exclusively of men. Two of its aspects made it inappropriate – on the one hand it publicly exposed a male urinary practice, while on the other it was a source of unpleasant smell. Subsequently, municipal authorities removed them. Be it as it may, since Homer is the earliest known author to emphasise number three (see III.1), this reference to trinity occurring also in the work of Duchamp is of characteristically Homeric origin.

Thirdly, the taboo of male genitals, which Homer cited at three different sections of the *Odyssey* – “male parts” (Lattimore 1965:6.129); “privates” (*ib.* 1965:18.87) and “private parts” (*ib.* 1965:22.475). Chapter 33 in *Faustroll* is entitled *Concerning the Termes*. The name derives from Terminus, the Roman god of



Brassai (Romania, 1899-1984). *A Urinal on the Boulevard Saint-Jacques*, 1931. Gelatin silver print on paper, 30 x 23. New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. | Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Anagram for Pierre de Massot*, 1/1961. New York. Gouache on black paper covered by wax, 21 x 19. Collection Miss Sarah Goodwin Austin, Castine, ME.

boundaries. In classical architecture a *term* is a free-standing square pillar, roughly of human height, with a male bust and genitals at respective positions, commanding the public's respect. Earlier, in chapter 27, Bishop Mandacious finished "a macaronic Greek harangue" (*ib.* 1965:71) ...*sesoulathai*, which is an imaginary word phonetically read as *c'est sous la taille* (it's below the waist), obviously referring to, yet not naming, the genital area. In this instance, in chapter 33, the penis is compared to a 'louse' (*ib.* 1965:88), a small, wingless, parasitic insect with piercing mouthparts that lives on the skin of mammals and birds. This chapter paints a picture of priapic encounters that Jarry develops in the following chapter, in which "the unforeseen beast *Clinamen* ejaculated onto the walls of its universe" (*ib.* 1965:89). As a matter of fact, deriving from the Greek imperative verb in first-person plural, the *Clinamen* refers to a military command for us to get into an aiming position, doubtless suggesting phallic erection. Likewise, Duchamp emphasised the male genitalia when he gave the *Chocolate Grinder* a prominent place on the *Glass*.



Anonymous (France, c. 19th). *Alfred Jarry (background) with Alfred Vallette (foreground) carrying the boat 'As' to the Phalanstère, Jarry's first home in Corbeil, 1896, Seine-et-Oise*. Courtesy of Collège de 'Pataphysique, Paris.

Fourthly, Jarry's commentary on the theme of repopulation may also have been important for Duchamp, in which a number of sexually charged elements of the *Glass* appear – the Virgin, a bride, *célibataires* and *célibataires militaires*, complete with uniforms (Henderson 1998:49). In his novel *Surmâle (Supermale)* of 1902, Jarry combined sex, the physics of electricity, human-machine analogies and humour in a story that presages the *Glass* (*ib.* 1998:49). This novel, which appears to be the male equivalent of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's female *The Future Eve* of 1886, seems to share the electromagnetic machine-to-inspire-love that is relevant to the *Glass* (*ib.* 1998:50). Based on the above evidence, it seems that Jarry's literature exerted great influence on Duchamp. This is why it is important to investigate how *Faustroll* relates to the *Odyssey* and for what reason Jarry strove to relate it so.

It is a known fact that Jarry's *Faustroll* influenced Surrealism. Refused publication during the author's lifetime, parts of it featured in the *Revue Blanche* magazine, before being posthumously published in 1911 by Fasquelle, Paris. Its protagonist is Dr Faustroll, a scientist born in 1898 in Circassia at the age of 63, who dies at the same age. The novel relates the adventures of Faustroll and his companions, the bailiff Panmuphle, described as a total boor and the hydrocephalous baboon Bosse-de-Nage, insinuating his butt-cheeked face, on their sea travel that is superimposed over the streets and buildings of Paris. This travel has been described as Homeric par excellence (Taylor 2007:111). Written in the first person by Panmuphle, who rows their boat, it describes the fantastic islands that they visit. At the end of the novel Faustroll dies at the same year in which he was born and sends a telepathic letter to Lord

Kelvin describing the afterlife and the cosmos. It is worth noting that *Faustroll* is autobiographical insofar as the light-weight rowing boat named 'As' actually existed in Jarry's life and he loved to fish the Seine from it.

Jarry makes it clear in the novel that it concerns an "epiphenomenon [...] which is superinduced upon a phenomenon" (Jarry 1965:21). Faustroll's adventure is to be understood in terms of "pataphysics, preceded by an apostrophe [...] the science of that which is superinduced upon metaphysics" (*ib.* 1965:21). He clarifies that, as a pataphysical work, *Faustroll* "explain[s] the universe supplementary to this one [...] a universe which can be – and perhaps should be – envisaged in the place of the traditional one" (*ib.* 1965:21-22). Therefore, Jarry's intention of producing an original adventure novel as an updated successor of the Homeric epic is clear. Jarry, *assimilateur jusqu'à la singerie* (assimilator to the point of mimicry), as Alfred Vallette, his *Mercur de France* editor, described him (Vallette, 16 November 1907:373-374), regarded existing literature as material for appropriation and incorporation into his own work (Fell 2013:978). Professor Brunella Eruli characterised Jarry's writing as literary collage, recognising its subversive potential (Eruli 1982). His collage may be understood as the fragmentation of existing text and its recycling into a receiving text, as a provocative strategy to disrupt the resulting work's coherence. Incidentally, such a practice of appropriative subversion may have instigated Duchamp's idea of the readymade. The collage quality of *Faustroll* is attested foremost by the protagonist's name, an allusion to Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* of 1604. Moreover, the collage is evidenced in the *livres pairs*, Jarry's anthology of authors that make up his assorted desert-island library. At the very start of this anthology, Jarry stated admiration for major past influences on the avant-garde. In effect, he created complex metaphorical portraits of 27 artistic friends – C. V. Boys, Thadée Natanson, William Crookes, Christian Beck, Alfred Vallette, Louis Lermoul, Aubrey Beardsley, Emile Bernard, Léon Bloy, Franc-Nohain, Paul Gauguin, Gustave Kahn, Stéphane Mallarmé, Henri de Régnier, Marcel Schwob, Laurent Tailhade, Claude Terrasse, Rachilde, Paul Valéry, Pierre Quillard, A.-F. Hérold, Monsieur Deibler, Pierre Loti, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Fort, Félix Fénéon and Louis Dumur – which Faustroll and his companions find represented by an equivalent number of islands visited in Book 3, *De Paris à Paris par mer (From Paris to Paris by Sea)*. The number 27 represents a cube, being 3×3×3, deriving from the all-important number three, which was first emphasised in literature by Homer (see III.1). In addition, 27 may have ironic value for Jarry as referring to the number of canonical works acknowledged by the Church (Arnaud and Bordillon 1980:181).

Initially, Jarry identified with his monstrous protagonist in his 1896 play *Ubu Roi*, "the human blunderbuss that smashed history as he went" (Shattuck 1965:viii). Subsequently, however, *Faustroll* "contains the spiritual autobiography of Jarry" (*ib.* 1965:xvi). Projecting his disrespect to royalty, religion and society, via brutality (violence), vulgarity (scatology) and crudity (utter lack of literary finish), this work ushers in Modernism in the 20th century. Its aim is the "search for a new reality, a stupendous effort to create out of the ruins Ubu had left behind a new system of values – the world of pataphysics" (*ib.* 1965:ix). For this work, Jarry adopted "the loose narrative form of an indefinitely renewed journey to marvellous lands" (*ib.* 1965:xi), as originally known from Homer's *Odyssey*.

The 17th selection from the *livres pairs* is *The Odyssey*, actually entitled *Homeri Odyssea*, edited by Guilielmus Dindorfius (1802-1883) and published in Leipzig by Teubner in 1862. The choice reflects Jarry's education; he had real ability in the classical languages (Fisher 2000:89). Jarry's omission of the name of Homer, however, reflects the conviction of many 19th century experts that a plurality of authors composed the *Odyssey* (*ib.* 2000:89). In any case, the *Odyssey* is a fertile source for *Faustroll*'s composition, not least as the origin of the voyage structure (*ib.* 2000:89).

The comparison between the Siren Painter's *Ship of Odysseus passing the Sirens* of c. 480 BC and an illustration by Gil Chevalier, who made a pastiche of Beardsley's drawings and copied his monogram, is quite instrumental. Becoming Regent of Catachimie in 1970, Chevalier gave various illustrations for publications of the Collège de 'Pataphysique, Paris, including the *Portrait of Dr Faustroll 'restored' after the lost portrait by Aubrey Beardsley*, which Jarry mentions in chapter 4 of *Faustroll*. This illustration first appeared with the simple caption – Aubrey Beardsley, *Il dottor Faustroll* in "Annotated Faustroll" of *Organographs of Pataphysical Cymbalum*, no. 15-16, of 18 January 1982, where it is clearly dated 1981. The illustration's simple legend makes Jarry scholar Dr Jill Fell believe that Chevalier did not want to put his name to his picture of Faustroll and intended it as a reconstruction of a lost work by Beardsley, rather than a spoof. Ever since, however, this illustration has been mis-catalogued as an undated Beardsley – first in the Milan 1983 exhibition, *Jarry e la Patafisica: Arte, Letteratura, Spettacolo* and then in the Valencia 2000 exhibition, *Alfred Jarry: De los Nabis a la Patafisica*.

On the one hand, the Attic stamnos from Vulci depicts the *Odyssey's Sirens* episode during the hero's long homeward journey to Ithaca, following the end of the Trojan War. The Sirens are imaginary creatures with a bird's body and a woman's upper part. With their wine-sweet song, the Sirens try with intoxication to lead Odysseus into



Siren Painter (Greece, c. 5th BC). *The Ship of Odysseus passing the Sirens*, c. 480 BC. Attic red-figure stamnos, H:36. London, UK: British Museum | Gil Chevalier (France, b. 1968). *Portrait of Dr Faustroll ‘restored’ after the lost portrait by Aubrey Beardsley, 1981*. Reproduced in *Organographes du Cymbalum Pataphysicum*, N° 15-16, of 18 January 1982:8.

shipwreck. However, as advised by Circe, Odysseus had himself tied upright to his ship’s mast and obliged his crewmen to block their ears with wax so that they could not hear his commands. The ship of Odysseus moves to the left, propelled by oars, of which six are seen on its side; the heads and shoulders of four oarsmen and the torso of the steersman are also visible. Interestingly, one of the three Sirens appears to be descending into the sea, which possibly references the legend that the Sirens would die if any sailors ever successfully escaped their clutches.

On the other hand, the Beardsleyesque illustration represents three figures – the towering figure of Faustroll as captain, Panmuphle as oarsman and Bosse-de-Nage as steersman – under the surveying gaze of God, a reference to Beardsley’s 1893 caricature of Oscar Wilde that is a likeness of Jarry. In the novel, Panmuphle described the vehicle of their adventures as follows, “But this bed, twelve metres long, is not a bed but a boat, shaped like an elongated sieve” (Jarry 1965:15). He explained that it is a “perpetually dry boat” (*ib.* 1965:16), “never really touched by water” (*ib.* 1965:15). This seems to be an ironic reference to Odysseus’ ship, perhaps suggesting that the exploits of Dr Faustroll are as much a hoax as Odysseus’ homeward journey. In any case, the Münchhausen-like moustachioed Faustroll, quixotically pointing the way forward provocatively with a toilet brush, rises from the pool of fantasy books in his portable library, which includes the *Odyssey*.

Chapter 7 of *Faustroll* lists essences from each of the *livres pairs*. From the *Odyssey* in particular, Jarry chose “la marche joyeuse de l’irréprochable fils de Pélée, par la prairie d’asphodèles” (the joyful walk of the blameless son of Peleus, in the meadow of asphodels) (*ib.* 1965:19). This part refers to the *Odyssey*’s Book 11, *The Book of the Dead*, in which Odysseus met with the shade of Achilles, now a great prince among the dead. Odysseus cheered him with news of his son Neoptolemus, which caused Achilles to part “in long strides across the meadow of asphodel, / happy for what I had said of his son and how he was famous” (Lattimore 1965:11.539-540). Such a reaction is in rather surprising contrast to the sombre quality of this passage. Dr Ben Fisher found it to be “thematically in harmony with *Faustroll*, as it demonstrates the ease of communication between the quick and the dead, as do Doctor Faustroll’s telepathic letters sent to Lord Kelvin after the pataphysician ‘donned the realm of the unknown dimension’” (Fisher 2000:90). Therefore, in keeping with this choice, chapter 24 is entitled *Des Ténèbres hermétiques, et du roi qui attendait la mort* (*Concerning the Hermetic Shades and the King who awaited Death*) (Jarry 1965:59). For Faustroll’s visit to Rachilde, to whom this chapter is dedicated, Jarry transformed by poetic licence the Boulevard Saint-Germain into “le fleuve Océan” (the river Ocean) (*ib.* 1965:59). This refers to the setting of Book 11 – “the limit, which is of the deep-running Ocean / [where] lie the community and city of Cimmerian people, / hidden in fog and cloud” (Lattimore 1965:11.13-15). Once again, the narrative deviates considerably from the original source of inspiration. Here, then, Jarry chose to create his own *Book of the Dead*, a peculiarity of Faustroll’s universe being that those visited do not have to be dead – “La mort n’est que pour les médiocres” (death is only for the mediocre) (Jarry 1965:100), which recalls the ironic epitaph Duchamp chose for his grave in the Rouen Cemetery, “D’ailleurs, c’est toujours les autres qui meurent” (Besides, it’s always the others who die). To add to the complexity, Rachilde, a female wishing to be taken as male, plays the role of the King, while the “hermetic shades” invoke the *Mercur de France* review (note in Jarry 1965:127).



Anonymous (Smyrna, c. 4th BC). *Small Head of Polyphemus*, c. 330 BC. Terracotta, H:6. Paris: Musée du Louvre.
| Théo van Rysselberghe (Belgium, 1862-1926). *Portrait of Henri de Régnier with Monocle*, c. 1900. Lithograph on paper, 30 x 24.
Athens, GR: The American College of Greece - ACG Art.

Faustroll's chapter 20 is entitled “De l’île de Her, du Cyclope et du grand Cygne qui est en cristal” (Concerning the Isle of Her, the Cyclops and the Great Swan which is of Crystal) (*ib.* 1965:48). Jarry was referring to the Cyclopes of Greek mythology, a race of primordial giants. The name means circle-eyed and they were thought to have a single eye in the middle of their forehead. The term *cyclops* collectively became a synonym for brute strength and raw power. Though being a very imaginative adaptation from the *Odyssey*, Jarry wrote, “Le seigneur de l’île est un Cyclope, mais nous n’eûmes pas à re-nouveler les stratagèmes d’Ulysse” (The lord of the island is a Cyclops, but we are not obliged to imitate the stratagems of Odysseus) (*ib.* 1965:50). The avant-garde poet Henri de Régnier (1864-1936), to whom the present chapter is dedicated, was a friend of Jarry. Physically standing before Rodin’s *Balzac* in the 1899 *Almanach du Père Ubu*, Régnier is “celui qui cyclope” (the one who cyclops) (*OCBP I*, 1987:560). He is addressed as the Cyclops, not one of the strange monsters that appear in Régnier’s tales, but a reference to his monocle (Fisher 2000:104), as Théo van Rysselberghe’s portrait attests. Jarry wrote, “Devant son œil frontal était suspendue la ferrière de deux miroirs au tain d’argent, adossés l’un à l’autre dans un cadre de Janus. [...] il] discernait clairement, à travers, les choses ultra-violettes qui nous étaient interdites.” (Before his frontal eye was hung a forehead-chain encircling two silvered mirrors, back to back in a Janus frame. [He could] discern clearly through these mirrors those ultraviolet elements hidden from us.) (Jarry 1965:50). Therefore, Régnier’s monocle was supposed to enhance his vision and open it up to the sphere of pataphysics, “the science of imaginary solutions” (*ib.* 1965:22). Likewise, Duchamp may have intended to endow the physical lens on *To Be Looked at* and the *Mandala* on the *Glass* (see III.11), with similar pataphysical properties.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Tu m'*, 1918, New York. Oil and pencil on canvas, with bottle brush, three safety pins and a bolt, 70 x 313. New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery - Katherine S. Dreier Bequest, 1953.

Where Panmuphle narrates, “je regardai les êtres que je découvrais à reculons, semblablement aux observateurs dans la caverne platonique” (I gazed at the beings hovering into view from behind me, in the same way as did the watchers in the Platonic den) (*ib.* 1965:32), Jarry referred to the allegory of the cave in Plato’s *Republic* (*Republic* 1968:7.514a-7.521a), which influenced Duchamp’s *Cast Shadows* of 1918 (see I.2). With his reference to this allegory, Jarry subverted the allusion to a higher intelligence. Similarly,

Duchamp toyed with idealism. Seeming to create a serious composition on the idea of illusion and reality in relation to the shadows of his readymades in *Tu m' (You [blank] Me)* of 1918, he actually encrypted therein allusions to bare sexuality. Starting from the left of the painting is the shadow of the *Bicycle Wheel* of 1913, likely as Penelope's vagina. Dominating the centre, the shadow of a corkscrew (Duchamp made this readymade in the first months of 1918 according to a note from him to Schwarz, dated March 1968, 1969:657), may be interpreted as the phallus of Odysseus aiming to penetrate the vagina, which would explain the *trompe-l'œil* tear at the centre of the painting. Finally, at the right is the shadow of the *Hat Rack* (1917) hovering in the air as a premonition of cuckoldry (see II.9), which is the *Odyssey's* motivational agony (Lattimore 1965:11.176; 13.336; 16:34).

The *Odyssey* seems to be the adventurous condition into which humanity is thrown after the catastrophe of war, out of which it must emerge wiser. Likewise, Faustroll, prompted by his inability to pay his bills, enters a pataphysical adventure, going through *eros* (love) and *thanatos* (death), which led him to the conclusion that "God is the tangential point between zero and infinity" (Jarry 1965:114). Already from the outset in *Faustroll's* Book 1, Panmuphle admits that the reader "may also very probably understand me better during the course of this voyage" (*ib.* 1965:17), which somehow echoes the aim of self-knowledge implied in Homer's *Odyssey*. The novel concludes with the line, "Pataphysics is the science..." (*ib.* 1965:114). This phrase sums up Jarry's viewpoint, which regards reality as a cosmic joke, much like Duchamp and Joyce conceived of their masterworks – the *Glass* and *Ulysses*. Pataphysics welcomes all scientific explanations for the universe, suspending all values – moral, aesthetic and otherwise. As Fisher wrote, "What Jarry puts forward is primarily a way of seeing and understanding, in which the dimensions of imagination – which encapsulate literature and art – are more significant than the apparently real world" (Fisher 2000:4). As will be shown, this same observation may well be applied on Duchamp's *Glass*.

In conclusion, Jarry essentially retold the *Odyssey* with unprecedented imagination and dry humour. As Professor Taylor wrote, "The delirium of imagination in Jarry's writings most certainly informed Duchamp's great allegory of frustrated desire, *The Large Glass*" (Taylor 2007:106). If *Faustroll* relates so idiosyncratically and intelligently to the *Odyssey*, then the latter could well have exerted enough influence on the *Glass*.

Homer's *Odyssey* as paradigm of Raymond Roussel's *Impressions of Africa*

I.4

"I shall reach immense heights and am destined for blazing glory..." (Janet 1926:II). This is how the French avant-garde poet and playwright Raymond Roussel (1877-1933) described his sense of his own literary greatness to the psychologist Pierre Janet (1859-1947), who compiled this patient's case in *De l'Angoisse à l'Extase (From Anxiety to Ecstasy)* of 1926. Also, Odysseus expressed a similar conceit in Euripides' *Philoctetes* when he said, "But I am born wanting to prevail everywhere" (Austin 2011:v.1052). In the case of tacit Marcel Duchamp such a statement was put into effect early, so that the nickname 'Victor' was attached to him (see Henri-Pierre Roché's novel *Victor* of 1957-1959). Although Roussel's writings were disapproved of by the general public during his lifetime, he was admired by Duchamp and the literary avant-garde – Louis Aragon, André Breton, Jean Cocteau, Michel Foucault, Michel Leiris and Marcel Proust. In particular, Duchamp considered him to be one of his most important influences.

Many years after his suicide in Palermo in 1933, Roussel began to be securely appraised as the most strange, enchanting and enigmatic author of the French avant-garde at the turn of the 20th century. He was born in Paris, one decade the senior of Duchamp. He was raised in a palatial home at 25 Boulevard Malesherbes, near the Église de la Madeleine, Paris. His family also kept a flamboyant estate in Neuilly. In 1894 he inherited a substantial fortune from his deceased father and began to write poetry to accompany his musical compositions. In subsequent years, his inherited fortune allowed him to self-publish his own works and mount luxurious productions of his plays. By 1896, he had commenced editing his long poem *La Doublure (The Understudy)* when he suffered a mental crisis. After the poem was published on 10 June 1897 and was completely unsuccessful, Roussel began psychotherapy with Janet. At a climactic moment he disclosed to Janet that he was the "equal of Shakespeare and Dante" (Janet 1926:II). He might also have added Homer because this legendary author features prominently in his work.

Roussel's most famous work is *Impressions of Africa*. This was serialised in *Le Gaulois du Dimanche*, a notable conservative French newspaper in 1909, self-published by Alphonse Lemerre in 1910, when he was 33 years old and turned into a play in 1911. Its plot can briefly be summarised as follows. On a stormy night, the liner *Lyceus*, embarked at Marseilles destined for Buenos Aires, but was shipwrecked on the coast of the fictive African realm, Ponukele. The ship carried with it a strange mix of Europeans, including artists, bankers, dancers, freaks, inventors, musicians, performers and scientists. Captured by Talu VII, Emperor of Ponukele and King of Drelishkaf, the castaways were held captive until ransom were paid in full by friends and family back home. To stave off boredom, the unusually talented travellers entertained themselves and the people of Ponukele with fantastical performances of theatre and invention.

The novel itself defied an easy reading by the fact that Roussel chose to deconstruct its linear narrative in two conceptual halves. It opened with the investiture of the Emperor, the punishment of certain traitors and the gala performance. The second half explained events that created the context for the first half. It then spent the bulk of its pages describing the construction and operation of countless fantastic machines, all told with an obsessive eye for detail in dry and calculated prose. Finally, it closed with a statement that the ransom for the prisoners was paid and they were able to return to Europe. The novel essentially dwelled on two days, during which events took place simultaneously. Still, it is obvious that the novel was not concerned with resolution, but with exposition. As such, it served rather as a laboratory of literary experimentation, where the story begins either in Chapter I or chapter X, depending on the choice of the reader; each word contained another, each sentence contained the seeds of a future novel. Therefore, *Impressions of Africa* was a very pioneering piece of literature, giving an added reason to appeal to the emerging Duchamp. Particularly its formal separation in two halves was evidenced as much on the *Glass* as in the *Odyssey* (Valaoritis 2012:33).

The original novel significantly differed from the theatrical adaptation – the order of events in the play were reversed; some plot, characters and machines that were richly described in the novel completely disappeared from the theatrical text; and completely new characters were added to the play and became important players in the production. Roussel felt that theatre should never be static; as a result, he made changes to the performances on a daily basis and encouraged his actors to do the same. Circus-like posters were created to advertise the play, showing some of the attractions in the play. These posters shifted the attention from the original story line and changed the public's perception of the play. The attractions became the focus of the production; spectators often came to the play just to see the advertised machines. Roussel invested in his show's effects, as much its stage presentation as its announcing advertisements. In fact one surviving poster from those plastered on the walls of Paris, included the main 12 scenes in cartoons: 1) The musician Skarioffszky, in Tzigane outfit, conducting the earthworm to play the zither; 2) The



Poster with principal scenes from Raymond Roussel's *Impressions of Africa* (1910) for Théâtre Antoine, Paris, 1912.

It was largely with *Impressions of Africa* that Roussel became known as a decadent author obsessed with impossible machines and improbable tales. His play was heavily criticised; critiques claimed that the play was mainly a bag of tricks, with no substance. Spectators came to see a play that was put on by an alleged madman and did not see the play as worthwhile for any other qualities. The general public was incapable of dealing with its subject matter and its nuances. This novel's true meaning remained wrapped up in fantastic imagery and could be unravelled only by initiates into the delicate mechanisms of the avant-garde. As Roussel scholar Mark Ford suggested, the foundering ship *Lynceus* is perhaps a metaphor for the novel's infamous adaptation for the stage, because the adaptation "began Roussel's ruinous affair with the stage" (Ford 2000:115). "It was more than a fiasco, it was a veritable hue and cry", Roussel wrote. Describing the reception of the performances, "They described me as a madman, 'barracked' the actors, pelted the stage with coins and sent protesting letters to the manager" (Roussel 1977:16). Yet it was one of these performances, which made an



André Raffray (France, 1925-2010). Marcel Duchamp, Gabrielle and Francis Picabia and Guillaume Apollinaire attending performance of *Impressions of Africa* at Théâtre Antoine, Paris, on 10 June 1912. Reproduced in Gough-Cooper & Caumont, *La vie illustrée de Marcel Duchamp* (1977).

indelible impression on Duchamp and further inspired him to read and study the actual novel. It was also the first time that Duchamp encountered the work of Roussel. In fact, he had missed the play when it was first staged at Théâtre Femina, Paris, at the end of February 1911, where it ran for only one week. He attended its second staging that was given at the Théâtre Antoine between 11 May and 10 June 1912, along with Picabia and Gabrielle on the initiative of Apollinaire. 34 years later, in 1946, in the conversation he had with the critic James Johnson Sweeney, Duchamp spoke enthusiastically about Roussel, "It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. From his *Impressions d'Afrique* I got the general approach. This play of his, which I saw with Apollinaire, helped me greatly on one side of my expression. I saw at once that I could use Roussel as an influence. I felt that as a painter it was much better to be influenced by a writer than by another painter. And Roussel showed me the way." (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:126). Duchamp had remained affected by this representation even later in life and described this event to Cabanne as follows, "It was tremendous. On the stage there was a model and a snake that moved slightly – it was absolutely the madness of the unexpected. I don't remember much of the text. One didn't really listen. It was striking..." (Cabanne 1971:33). When questioned by Cabanne whether the spectacle struck him more than the language, Duchamp responded, "In effect, yes. Afterward, I read the text and could associate the two" (*ib.* 1971:34).

Duchamp related that he saw Roussel only once, in the Café La Régence, the famous coffee house in Paris where chess players met for tournaments and lessons and that the author was playing chess with a friend. "I am afraid I neglected to introduce myself", added Duchamp (Cortázar 1986:53). Octavio Paz placed this event in about 1932 (Paz 1978:195) and Bailey thought Duchamp declined to meet him out of timidity (Naumann and Bailey 2009:86). In the following year, 1933, Roussel had passed. Duchamp cited Roussel as the predominant influence on his later art and on his still-later vocation of chess (Ashbery 2000:46). The French for failure, *échec* – what Roussel considered his life to be – punned with *échecs*, or chess, a game that Roussel adored. Three months after learning to play, he devised a method for the king's checkmate with bishop and knight, a system of triadic relationship. The latter's positions he described as a *cedilla*, the little mark under letter 'c' signifying an altogether different pronunciation (like an 's' rather than 'k').

The architect Frederick Kiesler's *Poem of Space* evidences the importance of Roussel's work for Duchamp's creative process. Kiesler made this photomontage with the help of photographer Percy Rainford, from two photo sessions held in Duchamp's studio in January 1945. The final print formed the central image for a foldout triptych that Kiesler contributed in the March 1945 special issue of the surrealist journal *View*, devoted to Duchamp. In Rainford's original photography, Duchamp is seated at a desk, seen in profile with his face slightly overlapping a chessboard propped up against the wall. The chess pieces are attached to the board to illustrate the endgame developed by Roussel (Naumann and Bailey 2009:77). Arguably with Duchamp's help, Kiesler sited the relation of artist and author in the rear of the triptych by inscription – the former in the upper part as “Marcel D. / [symbol of the black king ♚] / born 1887 / artist-inventor / about the mirage of the circonflex networks in painting” and the latter right below as “R.Roussel / [symbol of the white king ♔] / born 1877 / artist-inventor / about the mirage of the cedilla (mark) in chess game”. Lyn Merrington suggested that the double Rs of Raymond Roussel's initials, as evidenced in the aforementioned inscription, figure into Duchamp's female pseudonym *Rose Sélavy* (Merrington 2002). Such a pun could be a conscious tribute to Roussel, Duchamp here giving him life – *RR[ous]sel la vie* (*RR[ous]*, that's life).



Frederick Kiesler (Romania, 1890-1965). *Poem of Space* dedicated to H (ieronymus) Duc'hamp, 1945 New York.

Centre foldout triptych for *View* 5.1: 26-28 (March 1945). Vienna, AT: Österreichische Friedrich und Lillian Kiesler Privatstiftung.

Roussel and Duchamp shared interests in extraordinary machines, playful inventions and contemporary science, but perhaps more central to their methods, was the pun. Duchamp championed Roussel as discoverer of the verbal readymade. Roussel transformed the banal forms of language, such as advertisements and addresses, into strands of his narratives. In his introduction to *Death and the Labyrinth*, James Fabion described Roussel as having a “preoccupation with the prefabrication of language, with the ‘readymade’ and artificial quality of words and phrases and sentences” (Foucault 1986:xiii). In an interview with Michel Foucault, Charles Raus associated this ‘readymade’ quality of language with the development of readymades in the visual arts, an unstated, but obvious nod to Duchamp. Foucault's response to the readymade suggestion, further suggested a comparison of Duchamp and Roussel – “What Roussel did was to take a completely banal sentence, heard every day, taken from songs, read on walls and with it he constructed the most absurd things, the most improbable situations, without any possible relationship to reality” (Foucault 1986:178). It was Roussel who gave Duchamp the idea that he “could try something [with word-play] in the sense of which we are speaking or rather antisense” (Cabanne 1971:41).

In his book *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres (How I Wrote Certain of my Books)*, posthumously published in 1935, Roussel explained the complex process through which he generated *Impressions of Africa* in the hope of rescuing his writing from obscurity. Therein he described a Rousselian technique of “invention based on the pairing of two words taken in different senses”. For Roussel, the pun was the beginning and the end, a tool that “enabled him to fuse narrative and language into an indivisible whole” (Ford 2000:2). The genesis of Roussel's elaborate narrative in *Impressions of Africa* was his choice of two words. Starting with the homophones *billard* (billiard table) and *pillard* (plunderer), Roussel generated further words in a chain of seemingly endless association – “This queue [billiard cue] supplied me with Talu's gown and train. A billiard cue sometimes carried the ‘chiffre’ (monogram) of its owner; hence the ‘chiffre’ (numeral) stitched on the aforementioned train” (Roussel 1975:4). Roussel outlined the very special process underlying the composition of his novels and plays – “I chose a word and then linked it to another by the preposition *à* (with); and these two words, each capable of more than one meaning, supplied me with a further creation [...] As the method developed I was led to take a random phrase from which I drew images by distorting it, a little as though it were a case of deriving them from the drawings of a rebus.” (*ib.* 1975). He provided a list of examples, mostly from *Impressions of Africa*. One explained the formula behind that zither-playing worm: “1st. *Guitare* (title of a Victor Hugo poem) *à vers* (verse); 2nd. *guitare* (guitar, which I replaced with a zither) *à ver* (worm).” (*ib.* 1975). Roussel was fascinated by the metagram – how switching one letter could so fundamentally change the meaning of the line and the kinds of unanticipated stories that might emerge when the two lines become the basis for a narrative. He declared it his duty to disclose this secret method, so that future writers may benefit from his innovations.

Roussel stated, “As for the origin of *Impressions of Africa*, it consisted of reconciling the words *billard* and *pillard*. The ‘pillard’ was Talu; the ‘bandes’ his warlike hordes; the ‘blanc’ Carmichael” (*ib.* 1975). He described this dislocation of association as reconciliation. From *pillard* and *blanc*, he developed the story of cabaret singer Carmichael, teacher and captive of Emperor Talu. So impressed was Talu by Carmichael’s enchanting falsetto, blue silk gown and golden-locked wig that he demanded to take singing lessons with him. Within a short period of time, “Adopting a falsetto voice, which, in its imitation of female tones, was quite in keeping with the dress and wig he wore, Talu performed Daricelli’s *Aubade*, a song requiring the most difficult feats of vocalisation.” (Roussel 1966:60). The plot of Carmichael and Talu enacted numerous layers of difference. As Ford argued, Roussel’s method actualised “polarities between black and white, male and female, imitation and uniqueness that structure the novel as a whole” (Ford 2000:104). By choosing words based on a meaning other than the primary, Roussel imagined relationships between characters based on dualities. Starting with the pun, the displacement of language produced the doubling, imitation and transvestism he desired.

Although not without humour, Roussel used puns as a tool of his special method of imagination. Duchamp’s use of the pun, on the other hand, is a reflection of his humorous approach to difference. Ford described the pun as opening up a “domain of conception” (Ford 2000:51). Puns cause an explosion of meaning, destabilising the relation between sign and signified. This is not a logical form of intelligence; it is a comic logic, the logic of the worthy fool. Duchamp, “is not an irrationalist”, wrote Paz, “he applies rational criticism to reason; his crazy and carefully reasoned humour is the backfired shot of reason” (Paz 1978:89). Through the play of similar sounding words – *French* and *fresh*, *window* and *widow* – the essence of the laughable is the incongruity, the disconnection of one idea from another. Let it be noted that Homer was the first author to apply puns in literature. His *Odyssey* is replete with punning names (Valaoritis 2012:133) – i.e. *Alcinous* for quick-witted, *Antinous* for unwitting, *Briseis* for fertility, *Chryseis* for wealth, *Irus* for gender parody of Iris, *Odysseus* for distasteful and *Penelope* for cunning weaver. Even more significant is the Homeric pun *ou tis* (Lattimore 1965:9.366), which means no man and *me tis* (*ib.* 1965:9.410), which means any man and is homophonous to *metis*, the word for artifice.

Curiously, Roussel described *How I Wrote Certain of my Books* as “secret and posthumous” (Roussel 1975:23). However, despite promising to reveal its secret, this book seems to further secrecy. Foucault contended in *Death in the Labyrinth* that it, “hides as much, if not more, than it promises to reveal” (Foucault 1986:5). Roussel’s special method, as described in his manual, casts light on the pun, the readymade and perhaps even a Rousselian conception of the Duchampian *infrathin* – the almost imperceptible margins of difference between two seemingly identical items. However, this manual refrains from making any reference to Homer and particularly the significance of the Homeric triad motif, of which the *Odyssey* is replete (see III.1). As a matter of fact, the *Impressions of Africa* holds 117 occurrences of the third/three/thrice motif and 31 occurrences of the tri/triad/triple motif. This novel then clearly relates to a Homeric trait. However, as most of these occurrences are really unnecessary, they point to a neurotic obsession with the triad that defies the sacred role it held in classical literature.

A way by which the *Impressions of Africa* conceals its relation to Homeric literature is its general outlook. The numerous episodes of the novel, which seem to serve no greater narrative purpose, are in fact microcosms of the larger unity of the book itself. The novel’s endless gadgets and eccentric tales within tales present life as an immense accumulation of spectacles. There is no directly experienced living in *Impressions of Africa*. Everything is simulation and artifice. André Breton, in his first *Manifesto of Surrealism*, writes, “Roussel is surrealist as a storyteller” (Breton 1969:27), precisely celebrating this narrative stasis. The book is occupied with elaborate description. The tendency of Roussel to use the style of monotonous report betrays his disregard for realism or naturalism and his interest in creating a subversive text. This book is more a handbook than a novel, much like his 1935 book, *How I Wrote Certain of my Books*, is a manual by which to handle his major writings. Instead of convincing the reader of such a machine’s veracity, this description as a dry litany, actually highlights the artificiality of this book. It seems that throughout Roussel’s novel, narrative is only the casing that provides the framework. In this light, Allen Mozek suggested that the gist of the whole work is *process* before functionality (Mozek 2008). The procedure itself, like the movements of an industrial machine, is more important than what is created. Process itself is beautiful, regardless of whether it creates some thing of beauty. Consider Roussel’s anecdote of Händel, where the composer attempted to transcribe into music a particular phrase “which had been worked out by no direction but that of chance” (Roussel 1966:236), but eventually “the same phrase of twenty-three notes recurred throughout, each time differently presented and alone constituted the famous *Vesper* oratorio, a work of unmistakable power and serenity” (*ib.* 1966:236). Of course this is evidence of a fixed process producing beauty, but this doesn’t necessarily have to be the case. Elsewhere in the text, process is its own reward. Classical ideals of beauty are marginalised on behalf of procedure. Consider how the captive Europeans chose to communicate their bets in a makeshift gambling ring in Ejur. They “decided that only orders placed in alexandrines would be accepted” (*ib.* 1966:227). The captives’ attempts to gamble resulted in “halting alexandrines full of padding

and misplaced hiatuses” (*ib.* 1966:227). Whether or not their poetry is of any beauty is of less importance than the very existence of this process-based poetry. Roussel, then, represented an intriguing step in the development of contemporary aesthetic. Roussel renounced the bourgeois mandate that art be beautiful. Duchamp, similarly, welcomed procedure itself as a thing of beauty. Hence, his *Green Box* of 1934, which is a collection of 93 colotype facsimiles of manuscript notes, drawings and photographs, contained in a green, flocked cardboard box, serves the role of an essential manual for the *Glass* and per se becomes a work of art. Still, however, in every other respect, the *Impressions of Africa* references Homer, in ways that would not have escaped Duchamp.

As a matter of fact, the novel is replete with Homeric themes and motifs of cuckoldry and suitorship (*ib.* 1966:180). Regardless of its significance, the name of the eldest of the four Bucharessas brothers is Hector (*ib.* 1966:30). What is more important however, is the introduction of an all important story-within-story, in which the Zouave Velbar “recounted his Odyssey to Seil Kor” (*ib.* 1966:189). This narrative, covering ten pages (*ib.* 1966:189-199), recounts how the artist Velbar joined the Zouaves at Bougie, was chosen by composer Faucillon to assume the leading role in his opera *Daedalus* and as such stole the heart of Flora Crinis, his colonel’s lover. Encouraged by Mother Angelica, Flora began a liaison with Velbar, which had a tragic outcome. Finding out about their affair, the colonel broke off his relationship with Flora and swore mortal hatred against Velbar. Debts impelled Flora to gamble and her ruin forced her to suicide. The colonel’s continued hatred led Velbar to attack him and flee. He hid in a steamship bound for South Africa, which ran aground in Mihu, a place inhabited by ferocious cannibals. Emerging from his hiding place, he was enclosed with the other passengers in a pen, awaiting to be devoured. By using the Greek term *antropophagi* (*ib.* 1966:198) as an alternative to cannibals, Roussel makes the connection with the Homeric Cyclops clear. Having seen his unfortunate companions disappear to the last man, when the time for his execution came, Velbar run for his life towards the Vorrh, the immense forest that was the haunt of evil spirits. Equipped with art materials, he filled his empty days with imaging the drama of Bougie. After a number of months he heard the weeping of Sirdah, Talu’s daughter, abandoned there by Mossem. The discovery of Sirdah endowed his life with the interest and purpose to bring up his foster-child. After the passing of years a violent fire, consuming the Vorrh, drove the two out of the retreat and into Talu, who recognised his daughter because of the birthmark on her forehead. The identification of a person based on such marks is reminiscent of Odysseus’ scar caused by a wild boar, which led to his recognition by Eurycleia. Although the particular Odyssey sited in the *Impressions of Africa* is very diversified from the original, it nevertheless shares the main Homeric undertone of adventurous suffering leading to a catalytic resolution.



Anonymous (France, c. 20th). M. Raymond Roussel’s Motorised Caravan, published in *La Revue du Touring Club de France* 381, 1926. | Giorgio de Chirico (Greece, 1888-1978). *The Return of Odysseus*, 1968. Oil on canvas, 60 x 80. Rome, IT: Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico.

Roussel was an insatiable traveller undertaking extensive journeys. In *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, he boasted about being an avid traveller, “I have travelled a great deal. Notably in 1920-1921 I travelled around the world by way of India, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific archipelagos, China, Japan and America... I already knew the most important countries of Europe, Egypt and all of North Africa and later I visited Constantinople, Asia Minor and Persia.” (Roussel 1975:14). However, he did not base his writings on his experiences. “Now, from all these travels I never took anything for my books”, he wrote, “It seems to me that this is worth mentioning, since it clearly shows just how much imagination accounts for everything in my work” (*ib.* 1975:14). Roussel preferred the domain of conception to reality, his imaginary Africa to his experienced Africa. As Michel Leiris wrote in 1935, “Roussel never really travelled” (Ford 2000:20). He idiosyncratically ascribed to a solipsistic type of tourism. Though he constructed a special motorised caravan by which to travel the world, at no point deigned he to remove himself from its insulated

chamber to experience life outside. His caravan thus served as a model for what must be called a *voyage blanc* (Werner 2010:52), a void voyage. This over-valuation of subjectivity had its origin in the neurotic disposition that Janet analysed in his documented report on Roussel. His mental temperament, he wrote, “banked constantly on the imaginary”. He was “one for whom there was a clear split between the given world, the human world in which we live our daily lives and which we cover in our travels” and “the invented world which is that of conception” (Janet 1926:II.146). Such an inward aspect of actual travel is the subject of Giorgio de Chirico’s *The Return of Odysseus*. Therein, the figure dressed in white robe, based on the Homeric Odysseus, is rowing a boat in a turbulent puddle of water in the middle of an apartment room that threatens to flood the fringes of the space. Typical of de Chirico, this painting suggests that the *Odyssey* can trans-temporally be represented as a *pastiche* of everyday props in the interior of a contemporary building. The idea that the action is contained within the four enclosing walls suggests that the Homeric adventures are all in the protagonist’s mind.

Asserting Max Stirner’s concept of radical individualism, which he had learned from Francis Picabia (Buffet-Picabia 1977:37), Duchamp stated, “We are always alone: everybody by himself, like in a shipwreck” (Richter 1975:150). This statement seems to resemble the condition in *Impressions of Africa*, where the white Europeans are shipwrecked in distant and exotic land. It also brings to mind Roussel himself, whose pursuits led him to fertile isolation and eventually suicide. Well, the archetypal example of the shipwrecked man in the whole of literature is the Homeric Odysseus. The opening lines of the *Odyssey* evoke his lasting suffering, “Tell me, Muse, of the man of many ways, who was driven / far journeys, after he had sacked Troy’s sacred citadel. / Many were they whose cities he saw, whose minds he learned of, / many the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea” (Lattimore 1965:1.1-4). Duchamp was likewise well travelled and his ideas were even more so disseminated (see II.2).

Africa is dramatically present in the titles of Roussel’s main works. By 1899, he wrote the story *Among the Blacks* and offered a decade later the *Impressions of Africa*. He merely added a term to differentiate his 1932 title *New Impressions of Africa* for his poem of nearly Homeric length. In addition to his literary titles, Africa is the scene or setting of some episodes inserted into other of his works. This is the case for example of two chapters of *Locus Solus* (Lemerre 1914), the first mentioning the queen Duhl-Serul and the second the young Siléis coming of Bornu. Much of Roussel’s writing seems to be a colonial take on Africa. However, the absence of wildlife in his works like *Impressions of Africa* is a sign that the reader must hunt to understand the very particular ‘Africanness’ represented therein. This Africa seems to be the pretext for another Africa. At the same time, there is definitely a sense of Africa in this book that invites the reader to question the nature of Roussellian Africanness and its paradoxical nature. His literature involves primarily an imaginary Africa that participates in the collective unconscious of the Belle Epoque. “The book is a story of European modernity confronting its primitive fantasies, where travel to distant lands inspires fascination and reveals new sources of creativity through winding tales of humorous intercultural translations” (Demos 2006:99). This imagined Africa is populated by people, like Talu VII, Fogar and Seil Kor, who initially pose a threat to the European crew as the other. Before long, the fantastic is normalised and they, each in their own way, appropriate the culture and science of the Occident. They also substantially improve upon the inventions of the Europeans. They are the new blood that is entitled to the future. In the final sentence of the novel, the crew of the Lynceus return to Europe and “took leave of each other on the quayside at La Joliette, after a cordial exchange of handshakes” (Roussel 1966:317) ending the novel in an appropriately genteel show of etiquette; The old ways, obsolete in lieu of a changing context.

However fantastical, the novel is also based on widely held stereotypes. Dr Mark Polizzotti claimed in his introduction that “the Africa of these *Impressions* is not, to be sure, the Africa of geopolitical fact, but neither is it entirely a product of Roussel’s fancy” (Roussel 2011). As Polizzotti went on to remark, European expansion throughout the Dark Continent helped foster the widespread Western notion of Africa as that alien place where weird practices, unspeakable horrors and unheard of flora and fauna lurked at every bend in the jungle path. The novel’s text even contains excerpts that may be considered racist particulars – Talu’s face of “savage energy” (Roussel 1966:16), his daughter’s “squinting eyes were veiled by white specks of albugo” (*ib.* 1966:16), etc. The privilege of the European over its other foreign language raises an issue of barbarism – “the barbaric pronunciation of the Ponukelian text had been carefully transcribed into French” (*ib.* 1966:150). That Africa is Roussel’s choice location for such an exotic tale is certainly a side effect of colonialism, but it also serves as a commentary on European attitudes. Talu VII, after all, “whose origins were illustrious, boasted of having European blood in his veins” (1966:169), raising the question of whether or not his subversive intimidation is strictly African or a result of his contact with Europe. The surreality of the worlds Roussel invents might be strange enough to surprise readers into real critical perspectives on global relations.

Far from a conventional novel of adventure, *Impressions of Africa* is the travelogue of a carnival through the subconscious. As such, it is a literary thesis about man’s innermost soul, with feelings of love, desire, hope and fear. The amazing spectrum of life evoked in the novel is a portrait of Roussel’s subconscious world. His

primary mental problem would probably have been diagnosed as OCPD: obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, which often involves a strong preoccupation with perfectionism, combined with phobias and the urge to totally control oneself and one's environment. Roussel led a dandy lifestyle, which was extreme to the degree of eccentricity. At the same time, he was a closeted homosexual with a preference for rough sex with uneducated labourers and sailors. To keep up appearances, he paid Charlotte Dufrène to publicly pose as his female companion. This may account for his fascination with crime, violence and the carnivalesque – androgyny, cross-dressing and transvestism. Duchamp would have found in Roussel a model for multiple and shifting identities towards an alternate masculinity. In *Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites*, Naumann asked the reader to consider Duchamp's oeuvre a demonstration of "collective consciousness" in which Duchamp was "simply echoing a basic human concern: to unify or in other ways reconcile the conflicting dualities of life" (Naumann 1989:36).

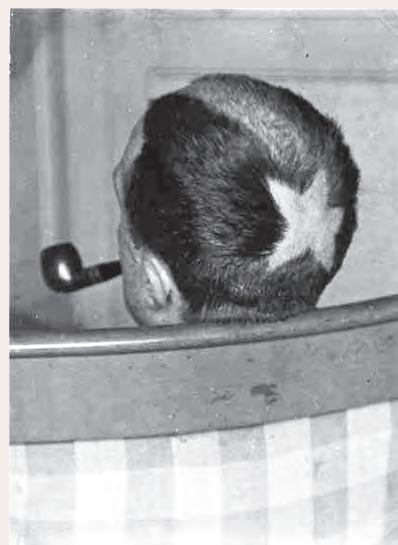
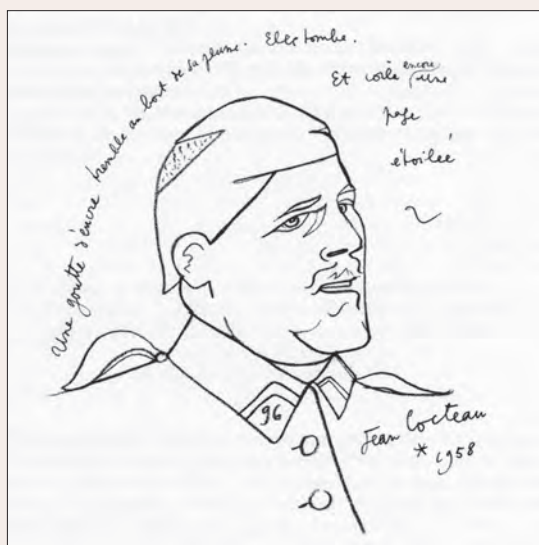
Admittedly, the *Impressions of Africa* is a brain-teasing novel, in some respects comparable to Homer's *Odyssey*. Demanding impossible and fantastic feats from his captives, Talu's imagination identifies with that of Roussel. Apart from being Emperor, Talu was also "a true poet" (Roussel 1966:182), who composed "an enormous epic, each of whose cantos celebrated one of his major feats of arms" (*ib.* 1966:178). This epic poem was the *Jeruka*, "a faithful account of the Emperor's whole life, in which great deeds had been numerous" (*ib.* 1966:82). "Each time he completed a fragment of the *Jeruka*, he taught it to his warriors, who chanted it in unison to a slow and monotonous kind of recitative" (*ib.* 1966:178-179). Despite being a masterpiece, the *Jeruka* was also exhaustive. The Europeans were astounded by the *Jeruka*'s strange richness, but eventually grew tired of the seemingly endless poem with a "tune, which had a strange rhythm and tonality, consisted of a single, short motif, repeated indefinitely with a constant change of words" (*ib.* 1966:82). Though the *Jeruka* may itself stand-in for *Impressions of Africa*, it reportedly caused exhaustion and boredom to European ears, a quality that one might think the novel shares. However, at the same time, the *Jeruka* seems to be Roussel's pejorative reference to Homer's *Odyssey*, comprising 12,110 lines of dactylic hexameter, a piece of literature extraordinarily long and incomprehensible to ears unversed in classical education.

The crew of serendipitously skilled performers that stage the gala, collectively known as the 'Incomparables' – including a historian, a hermaphroditic ballerina, a fencing champion, an ichthyologist, a pyrotechnic, a trainer of cats, among others – in many respects resembles the *Odyssey*'s wide variety of suitors. Likewise, the local drag-clad Emperor Talu resembles the pole of attraction that is Penelope, whose favour the Incomparables wish to win. Of course, there is further prize. Desiring to award excellence, the historian Juillard created the Order of the Delta, which is based on the Greek capital 'D', literally an isosceles triangle, which was "at once novel and easy to make" (*ib.* 1966:207). This prize could be an ironic reference to the throne, palace and realm of Ithaca that the victorious suitor would win if being successful with the Trial of the Bow challenge (see III.10).

Roussel rather used the *idea* of Africa, a place to him as fanciful and unimaginable as possible, as a setting and an organising device for his most imaginative of tales. "The work must contain nothing real, no observations on the world or the mind, nothing but imaginary combinations", emphasised Roussel to Janet (Ford 2000:18). *Impressions of Africa* is rife with living pictures, such as this passage from chapter V, "Suddenly the curtains opened again on a *tableau vivant* with an air of picturesque gaiety. In a loud voice, Carmichael, pointing to the motionless apparition, made this brief pronouncement: 'The Feast of the Gods on Olympus'" (Roussel 1966:76). Duchamp also employed the style of the 'tableau vivant' in his final work, *Étant donnés* (1966). Similar kind of imaginative scenes are showcased in the *Odyssey*, where every book concerns an altogether new picturesque situation.

Perhaps, more important than all the aforementioned Homer-related traces, is the Homeric mechanism of solving drama, which leads to catharsis. In the *Odyssey*, the solution came from Tiresias in the underworld. The gist is that complex situations in binary relations require a catalyst in order to be solved. Therefore, all of Roussel's nine episodes reveal the express need of a mediator – "Flora [Crisis], who was very superstitious, always consulted Mother Angelica – a talkative and familiar old intriguer, at once fortune-teller by cards, hand-reader, astrologer and money-lender" (*ib.* 1966:192); "Romeo as a child listened to the lessons of his preceptor, Father Valdivieso, a learned monk who inculcated in his pupil the purest and most religious principles of morality" (*ib.* 1966:220); "the old medicine man Nô, renowned for the extent of his powers" (*ib.* 1966:230); "Corfield undertook to make a musical transcript of the phrase which had been worked out by no direction but that of chance and the master [Händel] promised to adhere rigidly to the indications of the outline" (*ib.* 1966:236); "[Czar] Alexis [Mihailovitch] had been praying God to reveal to him the name of the guilty man [who poisoned his favourite governor Plehtcheiev]" (*ib.* 1966:238); When Soreau visited Athens a guide shared with him the metaphysical anecdote concerning Canaris in the wood of Argyros (*ib.* 1966:239); The police made the noble kleptomaniac Prince Savellini the laughing-stock throughout Italy (*ib.* 1966:241); The poet Ghiriz received instruction from Ku Ngan, a Chinese prophet and sorcerer in Bagdad, as to the means

to possess the fair Morisco Neddu, favourite concubine of his master the rich merchant Shahnijar (*ib.* 1966:260); A madman prophesied Neddu's fall from a height as a punishment for breaking her fast" (*ib.* 1966:265). Such a mediation of a third party serves as a catalyst to crisis. This third party, relating to the sacred triad seems to be the philosopher's stone, the lone star in the dark sky of meaning. A similarly instrumental role of the third party is played in Duchamp's *Glass* by the Mandala (see III.11).



Jean Cocteau (France, 1889-1963). Portrait of Guillaume Apollinaire, 1958. Ink on paper, 26 x 20. Milly-la-Forêt, FR: Maison Cocteau. | Man Ray (USA, 1890-1976). Marcel Duchamp's Tonsure, 1919. Silver print on postal card, 9 x 8. New York, NY: Sean Kelly Gallery.

Roussel, as recounted by Janet, believed he was predestined to have a glorious imagination. "Yes, I have felt that I too carry a star on my forehead", stated Roussel, "and I will never forget it" (Ford 2000:16). Canto IV of *New Impressions of Africa* (1932) contains what must be an autobiographical statement in the lines "the sacred flame of genius / Which makes the one chosen by it so arrogant / That he finds the very stars in the sky pitiful / In comparison with the new star that shines on his forehead" (Canto IV, lines 72-73). The image of the star on the forehead of the genius was one that Roussel associated with himself, even giving it as the title of a 1925 play *L'Etoile au Front* (*The Star on the Forehead*). The inspiration for this literary star was probably a star-shaped wound in Guillaume Apollinaire's forehead from shrapnel in the First World War. It also inspired Jean Cocteau to add the little five-pointed star to his signature. The significance of this is evidenced in the phrase, "his war wound foreshadowed his star", that Cocteau uttered on 5 June 1959, at the inauguration of the Apollinaire monument in Saint-Germain-des-Prés (from a press cutting at the Fonds Jean Cocteau of the Université Paul-Valéry). There is no photographic record of the astral mark on Apollinaire's forehead, because it was always covered. Cocteau accompanied his 1958 illustration of Apollinaire with the note, "It is difficult to imagine [Apollinaire] without this little leather helmet that protected his injury. [...] This little helmet seemed to be one with his body and the means through which he received and transmitted some codes" (Cocteau 1959:1).

The metaphoric star on Russel's forehead represented his genius of imagination and is reminiscent of another star, Duchamp's *Tonsure*, a shaved star on the back of his head, documented by Man Ray in a 1919 photograph. Duchamp's famous haircut, wherein Georges de Zayas cut a star pattern into the hair on the back of his head, may be a cerebral variation on the aforementioned Canto IV's line, about the star on his forehead, though he reversed the front for the back. Duchamp admired Roussel for what he described as his "delirium of imagination" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:126) and the location of the star on the cranium echoes Duchamp's desire to turn away from the retinal and embrace intellectual expression. Duchamp admitted to Michel Carrouges, "I am indebted to Raymond Roussel for having enabled me, as early as 1912, to think of something other than retinal painting" (Naumann and Obalk 2000:288).

Roussel was a unique individual – poet, novelist, playwright, musician, chess expert, homosexual, eccentric, drug addict, dandy and suicidal. Foucault devoted a book to him, while for Duchamp it was "he who pointed the way" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:126); to Louis Aragon he was "The Emperor of the Republic of Dreams" (Aragon 1998:198); Breton called him "the greatest mesmeriser of modern times" (Breton 1997); Cocteau "genius in its pure state" (Cocteau 1990) and Proust himself "a formidable poetic apparatus". Every major French literary and artistic movement of the 20th century cites him as an influence – Dada, Pataphysics, Surrealism, Oulipo and the Nouveau Roman. Yet he stood apart from them all, just like his admirer and emulator Rose Sélavy. However, the various ties of *Impressions of Africa* with Homer and things Homeric are as much specific as they are unspecified and would not have escaped the attention of Duchamp.

The Homer-Infested Modern Culture that influenced Marcel Duchamp

I.5

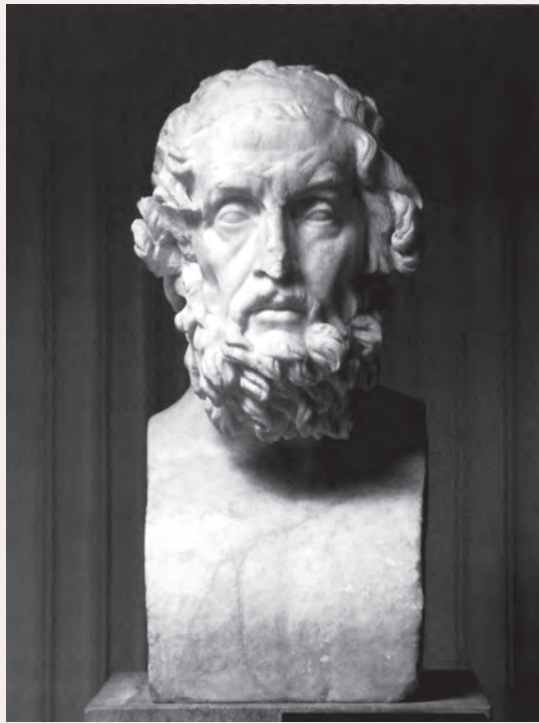
Western civilisation's obsession with the Homeric epics, what may be termed 'Homerism', spread widely throughout culture – literature, theatre, the cinema, music and the visual arts. In particular, modern culture at the turn of the 20th century was infested with things Homeric and suggests that Duchamp's thought and work were affected by similar conditions that notably prompted Honoré Daumier to satirise the classical tradition and Odillon Redon to challenge preconceived notions about primitivism.



Anonymous (Rome, c. 2nd). *Aesop*, c. 150. Marble, H:56. Rome, IT: Villa Albani. | Raymond Duchamp-Villon (France, 1876-1918). *Aesop*, c. 1906. Terracotta, 38 x 29 x 28. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

As previously demonstrated, Duchamp was exposed to a classical education. The same would definitely apply to his similarly visual art inclined siblings. Therefore, it was to be expected that their work in their careers as artists would reveal influences of the Greek antiquity, largely because of the momentum gathered from their education. It was thus that Raymond Duchamp-Villon, on his 27th year in Rouen, chose to depict Aesop, the 6th century BC Greek storyteller credited with the authorship of the morality tales so-called *Aesop's Fables*. These tales, involving animals and inanimate objects that speak, solve problems and generally have human characteristics, were gathered across the centuries and in many languages in a storytelling tradition. Scattered details of Aesop's life can be found in ancient sources, including Aristotle, Herodotus and Plutarch. In the *Vita Aesopi (Life of Aesop)*, an anonymous work of Greek popular literature composed around the 2nd century, Aesop was a slave of Phrygian origin on the island of Samos and extremely ugly. At first, he lacked the power of speech, but after showing kindness to a priestess of Isis, the goddess granted him not only speech but a gift for clever storytelling, which he used to confound his master, Xanthus, embarrassing the philosopher in front of his students and even sleeping with his wife. After interpreting a portent for the people of Samos, Aesop was given his freedom and became an adviser to kings and city-states. According to the vivid description of his *Vita*, in popular culture he was represented as a nastily deformed man. Duchamp-Villon, perhaps ignoring Aesop's marble portrait in the Villa Albani, rose to the challenge of inventing his likeness by fashioning a bust with broad but striking aspects after a sick and old man. This model gave him the opportunity to engage with a familiar ancient subject that relates to an interesting aspect in modern terms – eccentric characteristics that define the abject as opposed to the academic ideal. This tendency is reminiscent of Rodin's *Man with the Broken Nose* of 1875, whose source of inspiration was the Louvre Museum's *Bust of Homer*.

A favourite subject of ancient times seems to have been the Homeric epics and their author. Homer is the most famous poet of all antiquity; the alleged author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, epic poems focussing respectively upon the heroes Achilles and Odysseus. The first tells of Achilles' part in the siege of Troy, while the second relates the adventures of Odysseus on his journey home following the city's fall. The two epics indispensably form two sides of the same coin. In the course of time, they became fundamental to the modern Western canon, the body of writings that have been traditionally accepted by literary scholars as the most significant and influential in shaping the literature of the West. The concept of the aforementioned canon became important to the theory of perennial education and the development of high culture. Homer's appeal to the academic world is due to his epics' high level of artistic merit, their harmonious narrative



Anonymous (Rome, c. 2nd). *Bust of Homer*, c. 150. Marble, H:53. Paris, FR: Musée du Louvre. | Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (France, 1780-1867). *Bust of Homer with Orpheus*, 1827. Oil on canvas, 53 x 44. Montauban, FR: Musée Ingres.

structure and the beautiful use of language in *dactylic hexameter* verse, the grand style of classical poetry consisting entirely of lines made from six feet. These epics commanded the respect of such literary authorities as Aristotle, Goethe, Tennyson, Arnold, Cavafy, Appolinaire, Pound, Eliot and Joyce – to name a selection of fine representatives of Western literature. Duchamp’s ancient ideological hero, Pyrrho, seems to have referred to Homer as a proponent of ideas he approves of, ideas about change and the status of human rationality and language (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2010).

Homer is thought to have lived in Greece in the 8th century BC, which coincides with the late Geometric period of Greek culture that was visually concerned with symbolic patterns rather than realistic representation. The practice of inventing portraits of long-dead personalities was typical of the Hellenistic period. The Roman author Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) recounted that Homer’s later portrait type was invented in the 2nd century BC for the library of the Attalid kings of Pergamon. Many copies of this portrait were made in the Roman period. Homer had been depicted several times before, but the Louvre’s copy is the best-known imaginary portrait of the blind poet as envisaged by Hellenistic sculptors. It was discovered, as it now stands, in a wall of the Palazzo Caetani in Rome and was purchased from the Cardinal Albani collection by Pope Clement XII in 1733. The poet appears as an ascetic haggard with deep lines etched into his face. His long and prevalent nose, broken at its tip, is said to have inspired Rodin to create the portrait of Bibi, the workman with the broken nose (Picard 2013:34). His brows cast deep shadows over the sightless eyes below. Around his head runs a fillet, which keeps the hair tidy, but framing the face curls tumble over the ears and cheekbones. His beard is tangled and unkempt. Notably, it is this copy that Ingres used as model for the likeness of Homer in the many pictures that he painted of him, including *Bust of Homer with Orpheus* of 1827 (Musée Ingres, Montauban) and *The Apotheosis* of 1827 (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

The Louvre’s *Bust of Homer* was widely disseminated as a valid model to artists in France. One of the strangest places housing a faithful painting reproduction of it is the Chapelle de l’Humanité (Chapel of Humanity) at 5 Rue Payenne (ironically meaning Pagan Street), in the Marais district of Paris. The first floor of the building hosts the temple that the Positivist Church of Brazil created in 1897, fully compliant to the vision of French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who was the founder of the discipline of sociology and the doctrine of positivism, regarded as the first philosopher of science. Comte founded the religion of humanity for positivist societies. In 1849, he proposed a calendar reform called the ‘Positivist Calendar’, featuring 13 months with 28 days and, every four years, one day for women. This calendar is a tribute to great men – scholars, physicians, poets and artists – who worked for the well-being of humanity. On the two long walls of the chapel, are 14 arches each framing one portrait. From the right is Moses (January), Homer (February), Aristotle (March), Archimedes (April), Caesar (May), Saint Paul (June) and Charlemagne (July). From the left is Dante (August), Gutenberg (September), Shakespeare (October), Descartes (November) and Frédéric (December). The 13th month is devoted to modern science with Bichat.

The 14th arch is dedicated to women with a representation of Héloïse d'Argenteuil. The religion of humanity considered all these personalities as its priests, international ambassadors of altruism, renouncing self-interest for the benefit of others. A photograph records Salvador Dalí's visit to this Chapel in 1969, paying tribute especially to the portrait of Homer. Such a gesture reveals the respect Dalí nourished for the legendary author, whose epics inspired three of his works from different periods – *The Return of Odysseus* of 1936 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), *Apotheosis of Homer - Diurnal Dream of Gala* of 1944-1945 (Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst, Munich) and *Laocoön tormented by Flies* of 1965 (Fondation Gala - Salvador Dalí, Figueres). The aforementioned three works are remarkable for their extraordinary representation, typical of Dalí's paranoiac-critical activity, a "spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretive-critical association of delirium phenomena" (Dalí 1935:15). Despite all these works postdating Duchamp's *Glass*, it is instrumental to investigate the imagination with which Dalí invested his homage to Homer.



Salvador Dalí paying his respects to Homer in the Chapel of Humanity, Paris, 1969.

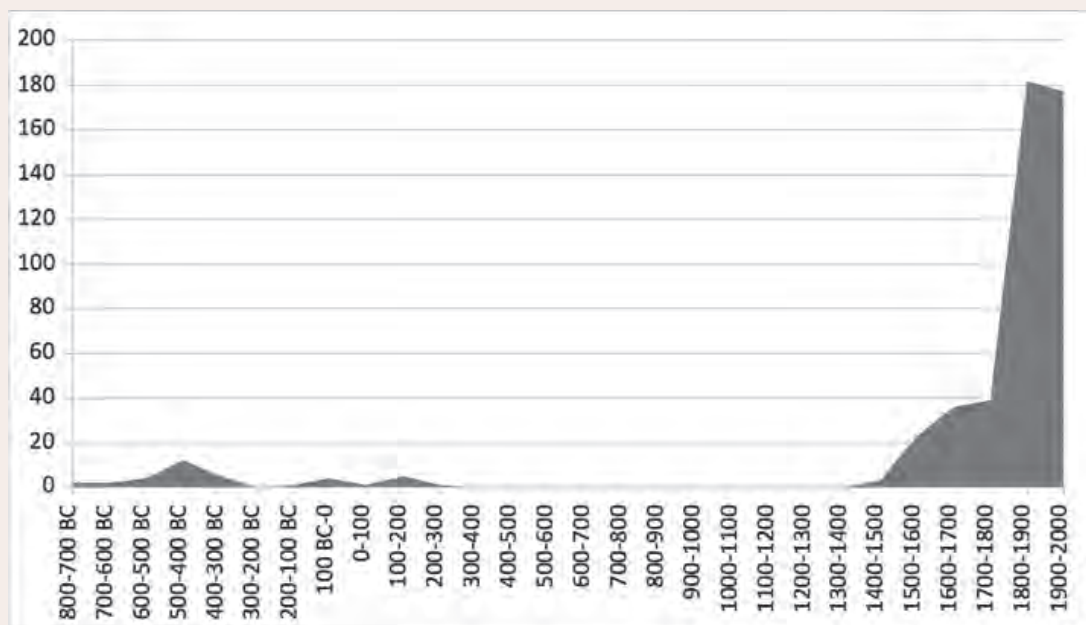


Salvador Dalí (Spain, 1904-1989). *Apotheosis of Homer: Diurnal Dream of Gala*, 1944-1945. Oil on canvas, 64 x 117. Munich, DE: Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst.

The focal point of Dalí's *Apotheosis of Homer* is the poet's bust, which emerges from the ground as stone, but turns upwards into soft flesh. He propped the poet's drooping head against his familiar symbol of the crutch, which could be perceived as his effort to resurrect ancient literature. In the catalogue for an exhibition of then-recent paintings by the artist at Bignou Gallery, New York, held from 20 November to 29 December 1945, Dalí noted, "Started in 1944, this picture was painted during a period of four months, working one hour a day. It was finished in 1945. It is the triumph of everything that cannot be told other than by an ultra-concrete image. At the left-hand side, the angel of speech is being born from the mouth of the blind Homer. At the right-hand side, Aristophanes is congealed in eternal laughter. In the centre, Venus emerges from a sea-going chariot. The locale of the dream is the Mediterranean Sea, at Cadaques, on a limpid winter's day." (Dalí 1945 ad loc.). The angel of speech is given wings through the paranoid-critical association with Homer's moustache. Considering the work's subtitle *Diurnal Dream of Gala*, the nude body of Dalí's wife reposes at right, deep in slumber, while the doors of her dream world are flung wide open onto a richly imaginative space, replete with a varied mixture of symbols, elements and activities. The detail of the canvas is impressive, from cracks in the floor to scattered pebbles and miscellaneous accoutrements floating in space, surely inspired by the nature of intra-atomic physics, which captivated Dalí so much. Certainly valuing Homeric heritage, the artist perhaps intended to underline how the impermanence of myth, represented by the bust of Homer, is directly responsible for a mutated permanence of the subject, with its new iconography. Such a vision, as exemplified by this painting, evidences Dalí's loyalty to the

individualism, which appealed to Duchamp, 17 years his senior, who was a particularly close and supportive friend of his from 1933 to the end of the latter's life. Despite their different aesthetic, they converged in key principles – the importance of the artist as individual; the refusal to put art at the service of social or political objectives; the centrality of irony in art making; the definitive role of eroticism in their work (Radford 2003:54). Being so close, it could well hold that the two great artists were also similarly rooted in Greek antiquity, only they expressed their references to it through their highly individualistic idiosyncrasies.

As literature is perhaps the arts' most lasting source of inspiration, it may be observed that the Homeric epics served as one of their powerful channels from the time they were set down in writing. From the outset, it is worth clarifying that the epics of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are hereby treated as a single body of literature, especially as the two are formally intertwined, the latter being a sequel of the former and stylistically related.



Digital graph rendering the frequency of the Homeric epics' references in the arts.

In an attempt to investigate the frequency by which artists represented the Homeric epics a digital graph is created based on a long list of 522 relevant works spanning all the arts – 19 of literature, 8 of music, 36 of films and 458 of visual art. This graph provides a chronological pattern with clear declines and climaxes. Therein, it becomes apparent that Homeric representations emerged soon after the epics were committed to writing, shortly after the Greek alphabet's invention in the 8th century BC. They continued with a couple of low points, coinciding with crises in the ancient world – the decline of the Macedonian Empire in the 3rd century BC and the end of the Roman Republic in the 1st century, until the eventual decline of the Roman Empire in the 4th century. During the Byzantine Empire, from 330 to 1453, the Homeric epics continued to be studied as high literature and taught as the basic component of Greek education (Hall 2008:14). Basil the Great (330-379), Archbishop of Caesarea, in his address to young men on the right use of Greek literature suggests, “all the poetry of Homer is a praise of virtue” (Padelford 1902:15.107), valued for the preparation it provides for acquaintance with the Christian mysteries. In the mid-5th century, Aelia Eudocia Augusta (c. 401-460), wife of Emperor Theodosius II, wrote *Homeric Cento*, a newly created narrative based on the *Bible* and made up of verses borrowed from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, designed to be recited before audiences. Anna Komnene (1083-1153), daughter of Emperor Alexios I, wrote the *Alexiad*, an account of her father's reign, which is replete with quotes from Homer. Ioannes Tzetzes (c. 1110-1180) offered an allegoric interpretation of the Homeric epics in relation to his own times. Eustathius of Thessalonica (c. 1115-1195) is known to have made an important contribution to Homeric scholarship by preserving in his work the remarks by preceding scholars – Aristarchos of Samothrace (c. 220-c. 143 BC), Aristophanes of Byzantium (c. 257-c. 185 BC), Zenodotos (3rd BC) and Michael Psellos (c. 1017-c. 1078). Niketas Choniates (c. 1155-1216) sought to reveal the secret beauty of the epics by explaining their adventures as moral parables. However, the epics' visual rendering in Byzantium was largely subdued, owing to this period's notorious iconoclasm. Representations from Homer take the form primarily of illuminated manuscripts by unknown or anonymous artists. Homeric representations revived when the Renaissance scholars recovered the epics for the first time since late antiquity. It was not until the middle 14th century that Homer's work began to be read once more in Italy. The Aretine scholar and poet Petrarch (1304-1374), who knew no Greek, had acquired a manuscript of Homer's epics as a result of his wide travels through Europe. Petrarch encouraged his student Leontius Pilatus (1310-1366) to translate that manuscript

into Latin prose. This translation prompted Christine de Pisan (1364-c. 1430) to make the epics known in the French court through her elegant illuminated manuscript *Epistle of Othea* of c. 1406. It also led to royal commissions like Apollonio di Giovanni's *Chest with the Adventures of Odysseus* of 1435-1445. The first printed edition of the *Odyssey* appeared in 1488, edited in Greek by Demetrius Chalkokondyles (1423-1511) during his tenure at the Studium in Florence. Such an edition would have inspired Francesco Primaticcio's influential series of frescoes of c. 1550 at the Château de Fontainebleau, Pellegrino Tibaldi's famous cycle of frescoes of 1554-1556 that decorate the Palazzo Poggi in Bologna and the odd lunette fresco *Wrath of Polyphemus* amidst *The Loves of the Gods* programme of 1597-1601 that Annibale Carracci painted on the ceiling of the Galleria in the Palazzo Farnese, Rome. Ever since the first Greek version was published, 21 more versions appeared to date. The first English translation was made by George Chapman in 1662 and was followed by 31 more versions until now. The first attempt at translation in modern French was made by Hugues Salel, who published the first 10 books of the *Iliad* in 1545, followed by Amadis Jamyn's publication of the remaining books in 1577. The entire *Iliad* in French was ultimately published in 1580 (Lucas Breyer, Paris), including the translation of the first two books of the *Odyssey*, which had previously appeared as part of the *Poetic Works* by Jacques Peletier du Mans in 1547.

The study of Homer in the West was secured as of the 18th century with the efforts of humanists. French Jesuit and writer René Rapin (1621-1687) was the first to give the standard neoclassical view of Homer's omniscience. He emphasised the educational value of the wisdom contained in the epics, considering Homer to be the teacher of mankind.

Homer, who had a Genius accomplish'd for Poetry, had the vastest, sublimest, profoundest and most universal Wit that ever was; 'twas by his Poems that all the Worthies of Antiquity were form'd: from hence the Law-makers, took the first Platform of the Laws they gave to Mankind; the Founders of Monarchies and Commonwealths, from hence took the Model for their Polities. Hence the Philosophers found the first Principles of Morality, which they have taught to the People. Hence Physicians have studied Diseases and their Cures; Astronomers have learn'd the Knowledge of Heaven and Geometricians of the Earth: Kings and Princes have learn'd the Art to govern and Captains to form a Battle, to encamp an Army, to besiege Towns, to fight and to gain Victories... In fine, Homer has been... the first Founder of all Arts and Sciences and the Pattern of the Wise-men in all Ages. (Simonsuuri 1979:150).

Rapin's views on Homeric omniscience, were welcome in England. English freethinker Anthony Collins (1676-1729) believed that Homer contains "the Principles of all Arts and Sciences" (*ib.* 1979:150). In 1735, Scottish classical scholar Thomas Blackwell (1701-1757) published anonymously his first work, *An Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer*, which explained the causes of the superiority of Homer to all the poets who preceded or followed him.

An unexpected change in the French reception of Homer that shook the world was introduced with the Enlightenment's *Encyclopaedia, or a Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts*, edited by Denis Diderot with Jean d'Alembert and published in France between 1751 and 1772. This seminal work attempted for the first time in history to define the world solely through rational methods. Under the general entry for 'Greek Philosophy', Diderot amused himself in dismissing Homer as "a theologian, philosopher and poet [...] unlikely to be read much in the future" (*Encyclopédie* 1751:1.908). For Diderot, Homer belonged to a primitive and superstitious age, representing a counter-argument to the Enlightenment's view of a world driven by rationality alone. This new approach served well the purpose of the French Revolution, to abolish the ancient regime of monarchy and establish in its place a secular republic that would be based on the novel principles of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Nevertheless, this enlightened period was short-lived as the new French Republic became increasingly authoritarian and militaristic. Idealists soon restored ancient Greece and with it Homer and his epics as a model for their ideal universe where men were noble and brave and in which poetry and philosophy were their principal activities. However, the attack on Greek antiquity was not to be forgotten.

Another significant point in the history of Homerism is the 'Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns' in France, which began overtly as a literary and artistic debate that heated up in the early 1690s and shook the French Academy. On one side of the controversy were the so-called ancients, led by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711), who supported the merits of the ancient authors and contended that a writer could do no better than imitate them. On the other side was the modern faction, whose leader, Charles Perrault (1628-1703), opened fire, first expressing his stance in a nutshell, "Learned Antiquity, through all its extent, / Was never enlightened to equal our times." (published in François de Callières, *Poetic History of the War recently declared between the Ancients and the Moderns*, 1688). In 1699, French scholar of the Classics Anne Dacier (1654-1720) published a translation of the *Iliad*, followed nine years later by a similar translation of the *Odyssey* and, in 1714, French author Antoine Houdar de la Motte (1672-1731), a champion of the moderns, who knew no Greek, made a translation in verse founded on her work. He

defended the moderns in the *Discourse on Homer*, prefixed to his translation. Dacier replied in the same year in her work, *On the Causes of the Corruption of Taste*. De la Motte took the liberty to change what he thought disagreeable in it, arguing that the ancient Homer's occasional lapses into coarseness had to be corrected and the modern Homer had to suit the poetically expert and tasteful audience of French polite society. "He called for freedom from the constraints of verse form and, abandoning erudite and theological or elevated goals to recast poetry as secular entertainment, embraced an explicitly philosophical approach, characterised by verbal precision and exactitude." (Spary 2012:123).

The 'Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns' in France generated a storm of controversy, which caused the renewal of the role of poetry (Létoublon and Volpilhac-Auger 1999). More importantly, however, it focused the eyes of the Western world on Homer and challenged the visual arts especially in France to engage with Homeric themes. From 1714 until today 190 notable works inspired by Homer were created by French-born artists, which account for nearly 1/3 of the entire list in the aforementioned digital graph. What is more, as the graph demonstrates, this group of works is largely responsible for the sudden rise of interest in the period that coincides with Modernism. Of this group 9 works were monumental sculptures – 6 in marble by Jean-Baptiste Tuby (*Laocoön*, 1696); Jacques Bousseau (*Odysseus bending the Bow*, 1715); Philippe-Laurent Roland (*Homer playing the Lyre*, 1812); Théophile Bra (*Odysseus on the Island of Calypso*, 1833); Jean-Auguste Barre (*Odysseus recognised by his Dog*, 1834); Henri-Charles Maniglier (*Penelope carrying Odysseus' Bow to the Suitors*, 1870) and 3 in bronze by Charles-René Laitié (*Homer*, 1806); Auguste Ottin (*Polyphemus surprising Acis and Galatea*, 1863); Antoine Bourdelle (*Penelope*, 1912) – and 10 works were monumental paintings by Clément Belle (*Odysseus recognised by his Nurse Eurycleia*, 1761); Georges Braque (*Odysseus*, 1932); Anicet-Charles-Gabriel Lemonnier (*Odysseus and Penelope bidding Farewell to Icarus*, 1803); Guillaume Guillon-Léthière (*Homer singing his Iliad at the Gate of Athens*, 1811); Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (*The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827); Victor Mottez (*Odysseus*, 1840); Léon Belly (*The Sirens*, 1867); Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse (*Andromache*, 1883); Gustave Moreau (*The Suitors*, 1898); Martial Raysse (*Odysseus, Why Do You Come So Late Poor Fool*, 1969).

The rise of interest in Homeric subjects to the arts, as exemplified in the aforementioned graph, coincides with the time when, on 31 May 1873, German self-motivated archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890), who since 1871 was excavating at modern Hisarlık of ancient Anatolia, the site that he identified to be the historical Troy, made world news by discovering the so-called 'Priam's Treasure'. Subsequently,



Dr Schliemann's Discoveries at Mycenae. Reproduced in *The Graphic*, London, 20 January 1877:60-61. Lithograph on paper, 41 x 63. Courtesy of the Gennadius Library - American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Athens, GR.

when American professional archaeologist Carl Blegen (1887-1971) solidified the stratigraphy at Troy, the layer in which Priam's Treasure was alleged to have been found was assigned to Troy II, whereas Priam would have been king of Troy VI or VII, occupied centuries later. Digging too fast, too chaotically and without making proper records, Schliemann had followed Homer faithfully and succeeded in bringing the world's attention to prehistoric cultures. Originally a successful businessman, Schliemann materialised his boyhood dream to engage with archaeology and prove to all those who were dubious the historicity of Homer. Driven by his zeal to identify sites mentioned in the Homeric epics, like Mycenae in 1877, he made news at the time, exciting the imagination of the Western world, profoundly affecting intellectual life in modern times and causing a renewed interest in the historicity of the epics. An engraved illustration for the British weekly illustrated newspaper *The Graphic* of 20 January 1877, rather arbitrarily relates a picture of "Mdme. Schliemann in the Parure of Helen of Troy" to "Dr Schliemann's Discoveries at Mycenae". Regardless of its confusion, such a blockbuster publicity compelled mainstream and emerging artists to revisit Homer and engage with Homeric subjects.

Homerism in Literature

In terms of avant-garde literature, Alfred Jarry's novel *Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician*, published posthumously in 1911, seems to describe a Homeric voyage in a sea over Paris (see I.3). Jarry's technique, fastening on something that already existed – Homer's *Odyssey* – and transforming it, was emulated by his friend Guillaume Apollinaire, who presented the play *The Breasts of Tiresias* in 1917, to produce a provocative interpretation of an ancient myth with modern elements. Of course, Tiresias is traditionally known for providing Odysseus with *nekyia* (necromancy), that is precious information about the means to return home to Ithaca. Interestingly, T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* of 1922 concerns an internal journey through a psychic underworld comparable to the *nekyia* in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, aiming to connect the reader with Tiresias in Hades for his invaluable prophesies. Though *The Waste Land* was published one year before the *Glass* was abandoned, Duchamp was indeed aware of the preceding works of literature, as he admired Jarry and was a personal friend of Apollinaire.

Homerism in Music

Contemporary music also took advantage of Homeric heritage. It is interesting to note that, following the example given by Daumier's satirical illustrations of the 1840s, the grave story of the Trojan War became the subject especially of a French operetta, a sung, dramatic work of comic nature, which originated in Italy and emerged as an alternative to serious opera. The French composer Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) became its most accomplished practitioner. It is worth looking at his operetta *La Belle Hélène (The Beautiful Helen)*, set in three acts to an original French libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. With its elements of comedy, satire and parody, this farcical opera told the story of the elopement of Helen, a demigoddess "tart" as the libretto calls her, with Paris, the Trojan shepherd/prince, which set off the Trojan War. Its content, transparently veiled by the ancient plot, was a scathing critique of Second Empire society and its vulgarly decadent Parisian upper class with its lack of morality and rampant thirst for pleasure. Not coincidentally, in one of its first productions in Vienna, with a tacit approval of composer, Ménélas had a moustache and looked like Napoleon III, while Hélène appeared in the makeup of Eugénie de Montijo, the last Empress consort of the French. It was first performed at the Théâtre des Variétés, Paris, on 17 December 1864 and was increasingly successful thereafter in France and abroad. It accomplished the task of making the operetta a fashionable form of music amongst the French people. In this spirit of subverting classical tradition appeared Henri-Alfred Darjou's caricature in the *Humouristic Review of Theatres*, which ridicules the Judgement of Paris, the story from Greek mythology, which was one of the events that led up to the Trojan War and to the foundation of Rome. What is more, the success of this operetta prompted France's pre-eminent chef Auguste Escoffier, referred to by the national press as "king of chefs and chef of kings" (Claiborne and Franey 1970), to create the classic dessert *Poires Belle Hélène*. Considering it was made from pears poached in sugar syrup and served with vanilla ice cream, chocolate syrup and crystallised violets, this desert would qualify by today's standards as a blockbuster. All this hype still had reverberations in Duchamp's youth and it was perhaps in a similar humorous spirit that he invented his feminine alter ego *Belle Haleine* in 1921 (see II.7).

Henri-Alfred Darjou
(France, 1832-1874).
*La Belle Hélène in the Revue
Humouristique des Théâtres, 1864.*
Etching on paper, 12 x 18.
Paris, FR: Bibliothèque Nationale
de France.



Charles Gerschel
 (France, 1871-1948).
Lucienne Bréval as Penelope and
Lucien Muratore as Odysseus in
Gabriel Fauré's *Pénélope*, 5.1913,
Paris. Paris, FR: Bibliothèque
Nationale de France.



Continuing Offenbach's operetta tradition in the turn of the century, followed *The Marriage of Telemachus* by Claude Terrasse (1867-1923), known for composing the music for Jarry's *Ubu Roi* in 1896, which premiered at the Opéra-Comique, Paris, on 4 May 1910. This work's curious mixture of mythology, ending with the unlikely marriage of Telemachus and Nausicaä, would have been much talked about and appealed to a novelty-seeking audience. Moreover, during the First World War, the French naval officer Jean Cras (1879-1932) composed the opera *Polyphème* with a libretto based on Albert Samain's dramatic poem. This work premiered again at the Opéra-Comique in 1922, offering Cras a burst of notoriety in the French press.

On the other hand, the serious world of music also called on the Homeric epics. In 1907 the Wagnerian soprano Lucienne Bréval encountered French composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) in Monte Carlo. She expressed surprise that he had never written an opera and introduced him to the young Rouen-born librettist René Fauchois, who had recently written a play on the subject of Penelope. Fauré was enthusiastic and asked Fauchois to reduce his libretto from five to three acts and to cut the character of Telemachus. Thus materialised *Pénélope*, Fauré's well-known opera, which premiered at the Salle Garnier, Monte Carlo, on 4 March 1913. The piece was dedicated to the romantic composer Camille Saint-Saëns, who was soon to receive the Grand-Croix de la Légion d'Honneur. Fauré was not greatly troubled at the modest success of this work's premiere and regarded the Monte Carlo production as a rehearsal for Paris, where the work was to be given two months later. *Pénélope* was rapturously received at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris on 10 May 1913. Several newspapers from foreign countries thought it worthwhile sending their critics to the first performance. *The New York Herald* and the *Daily Mail* of London both praised the work highly, though *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was unconvinced by Fauré's music, finding it cold. The Paris cast was headed by Lucienne Bréval in the title role and Lucien Muratore as Odysseus. Duchamp was living in Neuilly, near Paris, at the time and took the opportunity to visit the capital when a significant opportunity arose. One such occasion was the presentation of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* with Nijinsky at the same theatre, whose first performance, on 29 May 1913, marked the end of dance of the Belle Époque and the beginning of the modern era (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 29/5/1913). Though it is not recorded that Duchamp saw

Fauré's *Pénélope*, its rapturous reception and press coverage would not have escaped him. Besides, Fauré was one of the foremost French composers of his generation and his musical style, linking Romanticism with Modernism, influenced many 20th century composers. It is interesting to note that Gabriëlle Buffet, a beautiful, intelligent and dear friend of Duchamp, had studied counterpoint with Fauré and gave up her promising musical career when she married Picabia in 1909 (Tomkins 1996:110). The fact of the matter is that *Pénélope*'s premiere may have added to the fermentation of the *Glass* in Duchamp's mind.



Georges Hatot
 (France, 1876-1959).
Still from *The Judgement of Paris*,
1902. Film, 01:00.
Paris, FR: Pathé Frères.

Homerism in the Cinema

Even regarding the new art form of cinema, which concerned Duchamp, from the emergence of silent films until the advent of talkies in 1923, which coincided with the abandonment of the *Glass*, the known films related to Homer are 19, of which 7 are French.

Georges Hatot's *The Judgement of Paris* of 1902 was the first known film to engage with the Homeric epic. This story from Greek mythology is the root of the Trojan War. According to it, Zeus held a banquet celebrating the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The goddess of discord Eris was not invited, for she would have made the party unpleasant for everyone. Angered by this snub, Eris threw into the proceedings a golden apple from the Garden of the Hesperides, upon which she inscribed its destination "for the fairest one". Three goddesses claimed the apple – Hera, Athena and Aphrodite. Reluctant to favour any claimant himself, Zeus declared that Paris, a Trojan mortal, would judge their cases, for he had recently shown his exemplary fairness in a contest. While Paris inspected them, each attempted with her powers to bribe him – Hera offered to make him king of Europe and Asia; Athena offered wisdom and skill in war; Aphrodite offered the world's most beautiful woman. Paris accepted Aphrodite's gift and awarded the apple to her, thus expecting to receive Helen of Sparta, wife of the king of Mycenae Menelaus, as well as the enmity of the Greeks and

especially of Hera. The Greeks' expedition to retrieve Helen from Paris in Troy is the mythological basis of the Trojan War. Hatot's film presents a *tableau vivant* of the myth, showing Eris gaily amidst the three contestants. The tight white uniforms offered a legitimate means by which to suggest female nudity at the time.

Early cinema used classical mythology as a platform for the display of optical tricks. Georges Méliès' 1905 film *The Island of Calypso or Odysseus and the Giant Polyphemus* was preoccupied with trick cinematography as a spectacle for the masses. Méliès was a Latin and Greek scholar, always fascinated by Greek mythology. In this film, Odysseus approaches a cave and falls asleep in front of it. Nymphs, playing music, come out of the cave, discover the sleeping hero and sprinkle him with flowers. After them, Calypso arrives with her escorts and wakes him. All others slip away and leave the two royals on their own. As he is trying to touch her, she recedes with backward steps and disappears into the darkness of the cave. Later, from the same darkness emerges the hand of the Cyclops trying to grab Odysseus. The giant then sticks his head out to see Odysseus. The hero takes this opportunity to pierce his one eye with a stake. The wounded Cyclops recedes into the depths of the cave. Then Calypso reappears and tries in vain to hold Odysseus back by his cape. He hurriedly parts and she is left with his cape crying among her escorts. According to Pantelis Michelakis, Méliès' solution to have Calypso and Polyphemus cohabit the same cave is intentional (Michelakis and Wyke 2013:156-157). On the one hand, it cinematically plays out a sexual anxiety – the womb-like cave begins as a site of dream-like pleasures, but it soon becomes associated with the nightmarish threats. Odysseus deals with the threat posed by the cave by puncturing Polyphemus' eye with his phallic spear, but, instead of blood, a semen-like liquid pours out of that wound. On the other hand, it foregrounds generic affinities between Calypso as a vamp, a woman who uses sexual attraction to exploit men and the Cyclops as a monster, an imaginary creature that is typically large, ugly and frightening. Like Odysseus, the audience gains from the encounter with the feminine and the monstrous of cinematic fantasy.



Georges Méliès
(France, 1861-1938).
Still from *The Island of Calypso*
or *Odysseus and*
the Giant Polyphemus, 1905.
Film, 04:00.
Paris, FR: Méliès.



Charles Le Bargy & André Calmettes (France). Poster from *Le Retour d'Ulysse*, 1908. | Break from the shoot of Le Bargy & Calmettes' *Le Retour d'Ulysse* (1908). Published in *Le théâtre cinématographique à Neuilly - L'Illustration*, no. 3427, 31 Oct. 1908.

On 12 November 1904 Duchamp left Blainville to live with his eldest brother, Gaston (known professionally as Jacques Villon), at 71 Rue Caulaincourt, Montmartre. Having decided to embark on an artistic career like his brothers, Marcel enrolled at the Académie Julian, 5 Rue Fromentin. In 1908 Duchamp moved out of Montmartre and established a residence at 9 Rue Amiral-de-Joinville, Neuilly, just outside of Paris, until 1913 (Paz 1978:182). In October 1908, the local news most certainly focused on Pathé Frères's production of *The Return of Odysseus*, shot in the film-theatre studio of Rue Chauveau in Neuilly. Directed by Charles Le Bargy and André Calmettes, based on a script by Jules Lemaitre and acted by Mme Bartet (Penelope), Paul Mounet (Odysseus), Delaunay (the high priest) and Albert Lambert (Antinous), the film's poster boasts of artistically retelling Homer's *Odyssey*. Gone to the Trojan War, Odysseus does not reappear for nearly twenty years. Meanwhile, the pretenders to the throne of Ithaca flock to queen Penelope. She proposes to designate the lucky day when she finishes weaving her shroud. This is actually a ruse, because during the

night the queen undoes her day's work. After three years, a servant denounces her, triggering the anger of contenders destroying all symbols of the reign of Odysseus. This time, Penelope promises to marry whoever surpasses her husband's skills in a challenging archery contest. Back from his travels, Odysseus disguises himself as a beggar, wins the race and punishes the suitors.

Much of the film's hype at the time was covered by an extensive article in the local press, *Le théâtre cinématographique à Neuilly - L'Illustration*. This article includes instructions by the directors, which are given while the camera rolls but would not be heard, as the film is silent and acted as a pantomime. It is therefore a fascinating record, conveying to its readers the conditions of making a demanding silent film. The article is further furnished with five photographs that an anonymous professional photographer took of the actual shooting, thereby giving its readers another angle of the film being shot. What is more fascinating about the article, however, is mentioning that the filming was open to the public to visit. One of the film's prized visitors was the successful French novelist Anatole France (1844-1924), who in 1919 conceived the idea of writing a novel to be entitled *The Cyclops*, a tradi-comic satire on mankind.



Theo Angelopoulos
(Greece, 1935-2012).
Still from *Lumière and Company: Odysseus*, 1995. Film, 52".
Courtesy of Institut Lumière,
Lyon, FR.

Indeed, early filmic history is problematic owing to evidence that remains scattered still pending investigation and research. This fact gave Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos the unusual idea to suggest that Odysseus formed the subject of a lost reel of film by the Manaki brothers, Janaki (1878-1954) and Milton (1882-1964), the pioneering photographers who introduced movies into the Balkans at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1995, Angelopoulos participated in a project commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first motion picture by the Lumière brothers, Auguste (1862-1954) and Louis (1864-1948). Responding to the challenge of using the original cinematographic camera patented by the Lumières to produce a short film constrained by three rules – to be no longer than 52 seconds; without synchronised sound; do no more than three takes – Angelopoulos shot a sequence in which Odysseus wakes up on a shore he does not recognise, approaches the camera and stares into it with puzzlement. The title that introduces the sequence situates it in Ithaca, quoting Odysseus' first words upon arrival at his

homeland in the *Odyssey*, Book 13. It reads, "Ulysses: 'I am lost! In what foreign land have I arrived again?' Homer's *Odyssey*." In this short sequence, Odysseus sees but fails to recognise what should be familiar. Like others of this project's partners, Angelopoulos had his actor acknowledge the presence of the camera and through it the perspective of the audience. The intense stare of the actor is supposed to be the first filmic documentation of a gaze in the Balkans and the search for its lost reel becomes at the same time the search for a gaze with which to see today's crumpling world. The *Lumière and Company: Odysseus* short was incorporated in Angelopoulos' greater drama film, *Ulysses' Gaze* of the same year. More importantly, at the close of the 20th century, it underlines the timeless appeal of the Odyssean subject.

Closing the Homer-infested cinema section, it is worth noting that in modern times the term "Odyssey" became so familiar and widespread, especially in titles of films, that it sometimes lost its Homeric overtones. That is certainly the case with the following five silent films: Charles-Lucien Lépine's *Odyssey of a Peasant in Paris* (1905); Itala Film's *The Odyssey of a Soldier* (1909); Romolo Bacchini's *Odyssey of a Supper* (1909); Hobart Bosworth's *An Odyssey of the North* (1914); Burton Holmes' *A Polynesian Odyssey* (1921). All these films are likely to have attracted the attention of Duchamp, who would perhaps enjoy their ramification from the ancient source.

Homerism in the Visual Arts

Of all the monumental Homerist paintings, the most glorious was certainly *The Apotheosis of Homer* of 1827, commissioned to Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres for the Louvre. It assembles in a single composition a representative body of some of the greatest artists and intellectuals in Western history, from the time of Homer through Imperial Rome, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the French Baroque and the contemporary France of Charles X. With its programme, Ingres established an unimpeachable aesthetic lineage for himself and by extension for the neoclassical movement itself. The composition is a symmetrical grouping centred in a classical way in front of an ancient Greek temple, whose lintel is inscribed, "To Homer God." The text chiselled into the steps of the base reads, "If Homer is a god, that one honours him among gods; if he is not a god, that he be regarded as one." Through such a writing Ingres seems to suggest that Homer is deified. Dressed in a white robe, Homer receives gifts, centrally enthroned on a pedestal, higher than every attendant and facing the viewer frontally. The picture's catalogue entry at

the time of its first exhibition describes it as, “Homer receiving homage from all the great men of Greece, Rome and modern times.” A total of 46 figures are included, all of which are historic personalities, except the Muse of Poetry (behind Homer’s left side), Nike (hovering over Homer to crown him with a wreath) and the two female personifications of the *Iliad* (on Homer’s lower left side, with a sheathed sword) and the *Odyssey* (on Homer’s other side, with a steering oar). The upper tier, from left to right, features Horace, Peisistratus, Lycurgus, Virgil guiding Dante (as in his book of *The Divine Comedy*), Raphael, Sappho, Alcibiades, Apelles (in blue robe, representing painters), Euripides, Menander, Demosthenes, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Herodotus, Orpheus (behind Homer’s right side), Linos, the Muse, Pindar (raising a lyre), Hesiod, Plato, Socrates, Pericles, Pheidias (in red robe, representing sculptors), Michelangelo, Aristotle, Aristarchus and Alexander the Great. The lower tier, again from left to right, features with few exceptions (Aesop and Longinus) more recent personalities – Shakespeare, two unidentified figures, Mozart, Poussin, Corneille, Racine, Aesop (by the personification of the *Odyssey*), Molière, Nicolas Boileau, Longinus, Fenelon, Gluck and Luís de Camões. *The Apotheosis of Homer* expresses the ideology of the European state in the decades following the French Revolution. With this painting Ingres indicated a departure from artists’ expression of intransigent individuality toward the reconciliation with the political needs of the state (Siegfried 2009:195).



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (France, 1780-1867). *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827. Oil on canvas, 386 x 512. Paris, FR: Musée du Louvre.

It is worth noting that 11 notable pictures, featured in the aforementioned graph, belong to the Museum of Fine Arts of Rouen – Otto van Veen (*Odysseus and the Suitors*, c. 1620); Anonymous (*Polyphemus and Galatea after Anibbale Carracci*, c. 1650); Jean-Honoré Fragonard (*The Rape of Helen*, c. 1780); Anonymous (*The Return of Odysseus*, c. 1800); Anicet-Charles-Gabriel Lemonnier (*Odysseus and Penelope bid Farewell to Icarus*, 1803); Jacques-Louis David (*Telemachus and Eucharis*, 1818); Joseph-Désiré Court (*Achilles giving Nestor the Prize of Wisdom*, 1821); Félix Auvray (*Odysseus leaving Circe*, c. 1830); Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps (*Polyphemus and the Escape of Odysseus*, c. 1850); Gustave Moreau (*Diomedes devoured by his Horses*, 1865); Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse (*Andromache*, 1883). Considering the fact that this museum was familiar to Duchamp during his schooling, the one picture that must have made an impression on him was Rochegrosse’s monumental painting *andromache*, which to this day occupies a prominent position in the museum.



Archival photograph from the Main Stairway of Troy, 1870-1894. Dörpfeld 1902:20.136. | Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse (France, 1859-1938). *Andromache*, 1883. Oil on canvas, 480 x 335. Rouen, FR: Musée des Beaux-Arts.

The subject of Rochegrosse's *Andromache* is her tragedy, at the end of the Trojan War, after having lost her husband Hector, to further witness the sacrifice of her son Astyanax. The child is torn from the arms of his mother so that the great Greek victor Odysseus may precipitate it from the ramparts of Troy. Rochegrosse was only 24 years old when he painted this huge picture that he sent to the Salon of 1883. He obtained a medal and his picture was bought by the state. The picture's composition is strongly structured along the large ascending diagonal led by Andromache's arm towards the dark character of the assassin Odysseus, powerfully silhouetted against the sky. This compositional device appears to faithfully reproduce the historical photograph of the main stairway in Troy, whose monumentality is accentuated by the human scale at its upper part. Furthermore, the painting may surprise with its highly detailed atmosphere and morbid atrocities – severed heads, trails of blood, dead lying on the ground or hanging on the wall – while, at the same time, showing avowed eroticism with the beautiful white chest of Andromache and a naked young woman sprawling in the foreground. The artist probably rendered the protagonist figure of Andromache after Marie Leblond, his wife and muse, whose beauty was admired all over Paris. However, the strength of this painting lies in the archaeological elements that are rendered with realistic detail – the painted swastika, symbol of ancient Greece, the costumes of warriors and the shattered furniture from the palace of Troy. It is worth noting that at the time antiquity was being rediscovered and archaeological excavations were then followed by a wide audience.

The Swiss symbolist painter Arnold Böcklin exerted considerable influence on surrealist painters like Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst and Salvador Dalí. When Duchamp visited the Kunstmuseum Basel in 1912, he is recorded to have been impressed by Böcklin's important collection of works there. He found Böcklin's idyllic compositions to be strangely poignant and powerfully haunting (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 19/6/1912). Despite Böcklin, like Moreau, falling out of favour in the early part of the 20th century, Duchamp surprisingly proclaimed him to be a major influence. On 19 October 1945, asked by Cloyd Head from the radio station WMAQ (We Must Ask Questions) what he thinks of his *Bride*, Duchamp answered, "Böcklin was the man who gave me the possibility of [doing] it. Looking at [his work], but not copying. Not that I subscribe entirely to Böcklin, but there is something there. He is one of the sources of Surrealism, certainly." (Sawelson-Gorse 1993:100). As a matter of fact, Böcklin strengthened Duchamp's dislike for the anti-literary and anti-intellectual tendencies of the Parisian avant-garde and encouraged him to follow along a new kind of philosophical and literary art (*Marcel Duchamp in Munich 1912* 2012:23). One of Böcklin's most memorable paintings in the aforementioned museum is *Odysseus and Calypso* of 1883, which is known

to have also influenced Giorgio de Chirico's *The Enigma of the Oracle* of 1910 (Holzhey 2005:11). The composition represents the central protagonists at diametrically different ends in front of their dwelling cave on the island of Ogygia. On the one end, the solitary fully clad figure of Odysseus, outlined as an aloof shadow, ponders his prospective way to Ithaca. He turns his back both physically and psychologically to the nymph Calypso, who has detained him at Ogygia for seven years. On the other end, the sensual nude of Calypso, turns to look at Odysseus, seated on a mantle covered rock, supporting a lyre on her side. Böcklin developed a reputation of the painter reconciling myth and contemporaneity by way of a transcendent annulment of time and history (Baldacci 1997:37). Böcklin staged the ancient myth as the tragic relationship between man and woman. Eerily, this subject too seems to reverberate the *Glass*' underlying theme – the representation of sexuality between man and woman as an endlessly frustrating process.



Arnold Böcklin
(Switzerland, 1827-1901).
Odysseus and Calypso, 1883.
Oil on panel, 104 x 150.
Basel, CH: Kunstmuseum.

A French artist famed for his modern approach to classical mythology is Antoine Bourdelle. One of his most seminal works is the monumental sculpture, *Pénélope*. Its modernity largely lies in the fusion of mythology and personal history with disregard for classical stereotypes. In fact the artist is inspired, for the facial features, by his first wife Stéphanie Van Parys. The posture of the figure, however, recalls Cléopâtre Sévastos, Bourdelle's young Athenian pupil in 1905, the year he began work on the project and, after divorcing Van Parys in 1910, his second wife. Rhodia Dufet Bourdelle, the artist's daughter, identified the pose with an undated drawing inscribed "Sévastos devant les divins hindous" (Sevastos before the Divine Hindus), which shows a female in a flowing dress in a pose similar to that of the sculpture. According to Dufet Bourdelle, "while visiting [The British Museum in 1905] with her master, [Cléopâtre] fell in ecstasy before the Hindou sculptures and that is what the drawing represents. Then, when he had the idea of transforming that contemplation into Penelope's waiting for the return of Odysseus, father made it in sculpture in the likeness of his wife, Stephanie Van Parys, so that father's *Pénélope* appears like the synthesis of his two wives!" (Rhodia Dufet Bourdelle, correspondence with

the Bourdelle Museum, 4 July 1979). Dufet Bourdelle also noted, “as was often the case, he was inspired by everyday life and the title, to which he gave but little importance, came afterwards” (*ibid*, 25 January 1979). The sculpture enacts its succinct title, *Penelope awaiting Odysseus*, which is incised with capital letters in Greek along a single wavy line at the back of the figure’s standing ground. The rectangular base on which Bourdelle presented it at the 1912 Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux Arts (4 April - 30 June) is inseparable from such a work that despite its sinuous form emphasises the structural specificity of stability. Far from being a scenographic expedient, the prominent and pure base accentuates the sinuous movement of the composition while conferring to the work the stature of solidity. Despite its curved form and flowing design throughout, everything on this sculpture serves to create an effect of stability. A living pillar of fidelity, the wise Penelope has the concreteness of architecture. Like the fluting in a Doric column, the tunic’s folds cling to the generous forms, containing the amplitude of its volumes. The stiff folds reveal the body’s advanced right leg, slightly bent to counteract the swaying of the figure. The composition conveys both a sense of long-lasting fervour and the pain of faithfully waiting for the return of a loved one. Eyes shut, her head resting on her hand, she reminisces about her husband and persists to hope for his return. So, Bourdelle’s *Pénélope* is, on a formal as on a symbolic level, a melancholy incarnation of endless loving and painful as dictated by mythology. At the same time, Bourdelle followed a painstaking practice of beginning a major project with a maquette and refining the sculpture through successive stages. After the ever-faithful wife of Odysseus who waited ten years for her husband to return from the Trojan War, *Pénélope* took Bourdelle almost as long to complete. The sculpture was developed in four stages, through two studies on a small scale in 1905 (42 cm height) and 1907 (60 cm height) and a half-size version of 1909 (120 cm height), before the monumental sculpture boldly enlarged (240 cm height) was completed in 1912, in time to be exhibited at the SNBA Salon. In the first study of 1905 *Pénélope* carries a spindle, which alludes to the ruse she employed to forestall her many suitors during Odysseus’ long absence; she told them that she could not choose between them until she had finished her father-in-law’s shroud, but what she wove by day she unravelled by night. In the second study for *Pénélope*, of 1907, the spindle is omitted, as it is in all subsequent versions.



Henri Manuel
(France, 1875-1956).
Antoine Bourdelle in his studio
next to the monumental *Pénélope*
***attendant Ulysse*, c. 1916.**
Gelatin silver print on paper.
Paris, FR: Musée Bourdelle.

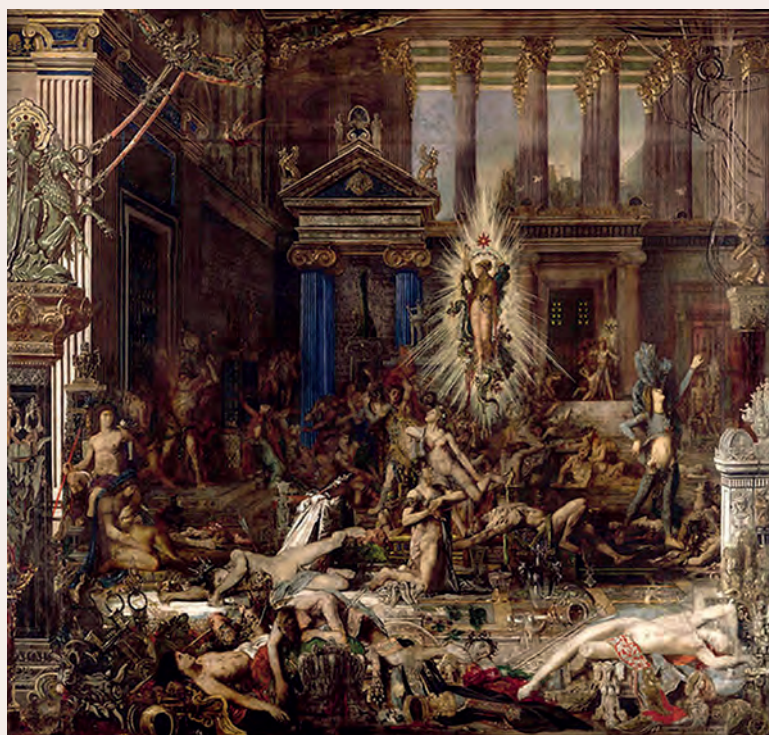
Duchamp did not cite Bourdelle, neither did the two artists frequent the same circles, but the art critic Guillaume Apollinaire, who adored Bourdelle and commented on several of his works, could be a link between them. It was on 10 June 1912, during the SNBA Salon, that Duchamp saw, in the company of the Picabias and Apollinaire, Roussel’s infamous play at Théâtre Antoine, Paris. Though of another generation and different artistic sensibility, both Bourdelle and Duchamp exhibited a number of their work at the *International Exhibition of Modern Art* held at New York’s 69th Regiment Armory in 1913, America’s avant-garde awakening. It is a recorded fact that Bourdelle’s *Pénélope* was widely publicised and commented on by the press both favourably (Merlet in *Propos*, May 1912 and Camille Le Senne in *Le Ménestrel*, 18 May 1912) and unfavourably (Sancerre in *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, 1 May 1912 and *Home*, June 1912). Duchamp would most certainly be aware of this work, even if it did not appeal to his anti-retinal approach at the time. Besides, the young Marcel was well aware of the work of his contemporaries as the aforementioned article reveals. He would also have been updated regarding matters of sculpture especially owing to his sculptor brother Duchamp-Villon.

Homerism in Artists cited by Duchamp in *A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions*

In *A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions*, an early interview that was first published in the *Arts and Decoration* magazine in New York on September 1915, Duchamp “explodes figurative bombs” on great masters of his past and present – “It is just because Rembrandt is none of the things that posterity has given him that he remains”; “Rodin is more subtle [than Velasquez] and thus better able to fool us”; “Greco is the root of Picasso”; “The only real cubists today are Gleizes and Metzinger”; “Daumier was good in a caricatural way”; “[Daumier’s] irony was not as profound as Goya’s”; “The spirit of Daumier is revived in the Greek cartoonist Gallinis [sic] who has lately done some very interesting themes in the manner of the cubists”; “Maurice Denis is a little better [than Bernard]”; “I like Bouguereau better than any of these men [Sargent, Simon, Blanche, Cottet, Bernard], he is so much more honestly an Academician”; “Remove all the evidence of the influence of traditions upon the work of Gustave Moreau and you will find that he is the most isolated figure of his epoch”; “there is great sympathy between the work of Redon and Moreau in refinement of colour and sensitiveness”; “Redon is one of the sources to which Matisse has gone consciously or not” (Duchamp 1994:80). It is an interesting fact that the greater majority of the

aforementioned artists engaged with Homeric themes – Rembrandt painted a half-length life-size portrait of *Homer* in 1663; Rodin sculpted *Polyphemus* in 1888; Greco painted *Laocoön* in 1610-1614; Picasso painted the monumental *Odysseus and the Sirens* in 1947; Metzinger painted *Ithaca* in around 1920; Daumier issued seven lithographs relating to the *Odyssey* in his *Ancient History* series of 1841-1842; Galanis made illustrations for the poetic drama *Polyphemus* by Albert Samain in 1926; Denis painted *Polyphemus* in 1907; Bouguereau painted *Homer and his Guide* in 1874; Moreau painted his magnum opus *The Suitors* in 1852-1898; Redon painted *The Cyclops* the 1914; Matisse made illustrations for Joyce's *Ulysses* based on Homer's *Odyssey* in 1935.

A careful selection of works by artists Duchamp mentioned in his 1915 interview, which draw their inspiration from Homer's *Odyssey* and were created near and during the time of the *Glass*, are examined below. These works would have attracted the general public's attention for their progressiveness and would have either inspired Duchamp to study their particular idioms or been noted by him for their iconoclastic tendencies. Therefore, deserved attention is given to Moreau's *The Suitors*, El Greco's *Laocoön*, Honoré Daumier's *Odyssey*-based illustrations for his *Ancient History*, which has been introduced above, Odilon Redon's *Smiling Cyclops*, Rodin's drawing *Odysseus and Penelope Reunited* from 1898 and Matisse's illustrations for *Ulysses*. The significance in Duchamp's work of Rembrandt and Lovis Corinth (whom he cited in 1968) will be investigated subsequently (see II.1 and III.13 respectively).



Gustave Moreau
(France, 1826-1898).
The Suitors, 1852-1898.
Oil on canvas, 343 x 385.
Paris, FR: Musée National
Gustave Moreau.

The one classical artist that commanded the respect of everyone that mattered in culture at the time was the French Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau. From the start of his career, he had a fascination for mythology and drew inspiration particularly from Homer's *Odyssey*. Moreau became a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in 1891 and among his many students were the Fauve painters, Henri Matisse and Georges Rouault, the latter of which was to become the first director of the Moreau Museum. *The Suitors* is Moreau's masterpiece, which preoccupied him till the end of his days. He began the work in 1852, enlarged the canvas in 1882 and left it unfinished at the year of his death in 1898 (*Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream* 1999:128). The starting composition was inspired by Thomas Couture's 1847 painting *Romans of the Decadence* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Moreau's subject is the climactic episode in the *Odyssey's* Book 22, in which the wandering hero, having finally returned home, slaughters the ill-mannered princes of Ithaca, who are vying for the hand of his wife, Penelope. Goddess Athena hovers near the centre, presiding over the scene of carnage. Odysseus dispatches his arrows from the threshold of a door in the right background towards the Barbarian King dressed in a blue robe at

the right side of the picture. In the foreground a brightly lit pyramid of figures is dominated by a young prince at its apex, as the artist explained, "uneasy yet undistracted from his poetic dream, the beautiful, the young Greece, mother of the arts and of thought, leaning on his lyre, scorning death and defying mortality... This juxtaposition, a collision of two worlds, those of action and idea, does it not seem to you piquant, even sublime?" (Mathieu 1998:32). The various persons who appear in theatrical poses of dying people have delicate morphologies, more effeminate than manly. After all, Moreau had discovered the model for the Barbarian King in a small Roman statuette of the young Phrygian god Attis, at the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, in 1858 (*Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream* 1999:69). The worship of Attis in the early imperial age was used in orgiastic events in which participants arrived at the extremes. The sculpture Moreau studied in Florence represents this little god exhibiting his instrument, but he did not include this detail in his picture.

The monumental painting of *The Suitors*, which dominated Moreau's home-and-studio, at 14 Rue de La Rochefoucauld, in the 9th *arrondissement* of Paris, was exhibited on the second floor's Great Hall uninterruptedly and a selection of its preparatory drawings (the number of works related to it is around 250) were also visible. The Musée National Gustave Moreau began to operate on 14 January 1903. Following his death, Moreau's great reputation waned and his art passed out of fashion. In a pertinent essay on Moreau, written in 1889, during his life, Paul Leprieur commented, "He is scarcely known by the present generation because he has carefully avoided all exhibitions that others run after so ardently" (*The*

Gustave Moreau Museum 2005:5). Despite this condition, the founder of Surrealism André Breton, regarded Moreau as a precursor of his movement for the imaginative design and dreamy atmosphere of his work. Ever since discovering the Moreau Museum in 1912 he famously used to haunt it and obliged his youthful students to visit (Mathieu 2012:10). When, in 1929, Breton wrote the introduction of Dalí's first exhibition in Paris, soon after their first meeting, he took him to the museum. 40 years later, in 1969, Dalí organised an event there, in which he announced the establishment of his own museum in Figueres, Spain. Significantly, Dalí chose *The Suitors* to extol androgyny. This work is associated with the Möbius strip, symbol of androgyny, according to Dalí, since it joins both sides in a single one, as two genders in one and the same body. In Moreau, claimed Dalí, eroticism is spiritualised; it is the kingdom of the Möbius strip. Even the staircase of his workshop is angelic and adorable. To illustrate his aphorisms Dalí was photographed wearing a purple velvet jacket aside a huge Möbius strip made of styrofoam in two key positions inside the museum – first in front of *The Suitors* and then before the museum's famous winding staircase (Mathieu 2012:35). Duchamp shared a similar attraction to androgyny (see Toumazis 2013). As Duchamp knew of Moreau independently and before Breton (he first met Breton through Picabia at the Café Certà, in the Passage de l'Opéra, in 1919), it is likely he was aware of *The Suitors*. He must have known from Matisse and Rouault, who were members of the jury in the 1908 Salon d'Automne that gave Duchamp his Paris debut, that their beloved teacher was open to new, freer ideas of colour and expression (*The Gustave Moreau Museum 2005:25*). As a teacher, Moreau insisted that to paint well was not enough (Evènepoel 1923). Such an approach of teaching would have appealed to the pro-concept artist Duchamp.



Salvador Dalí holding Jean E. Charon's book *Man in Search of Himself* (1963), in front of the Möbius strip before the staircase of the Musée National Gustave Moreau, Paris, 1969.

Another painting of Homeric subject that deserves attention for the update of its reference is Doménikos Theotokópoulos' *Laocoön*, the only surviving work of mythological theme that the famous Greek painter, nicknamed "El Greco", created. The subject's interpretation is based on the oldest version of the legend recorded by Arctinus of Miletus (775-741 BC). Accordingly, Apollo was angry with Laocoön because the latter treated his temple sacrilegiously and did not follow the order that prohibited him to marry and have children. Towards the end of the Trojan War, Laocoön was making a sacrifice to Poseidon, when the great *Wooden Horse* was discovered on the beach. The priest warned the Trojans not to trust presents from the Greeks and struck the Horse with his spear. Then Apollo sent from the sea two big snakes to punish Laocoön for his sins. Arctinus claimed that only Laocoön and his younger son Thymbraeus died, while the older son Antiphantes was spared, as evidenced in the painting. As an instance of illumination, El Greco situated the action in front of the walls of Toledo. Such a choice suggests that this work alludes to the conflict between ecclesiastic conservatives and the reformists of Toledo. El Greco further alluded to the tradition that Toledo was founded by two descendants from Troy – Telemon and Brutus. Moreover, the attack of sea serpents on Laocoön and his sons, leading to the destruction of Troy, is an event of pure tragedy with parallels to Christianity. This ancient theme may relate in El Greco's mind to the expulsion of Jews and Arabs from Spain. The new order of things is symbolised in the *Wooden Horse* galloping towards the Puerta de Bisagra Nueva, the principal entranceway to Toledo. Though not acknowledged, these qualities that update an ancient subject, would surely appeal to a proponent of individualism like Duchamp. During his summer stay in Munich, from 21 June until the first week of October 1912, Duchamp rented a room near the Alte Pinakothek. He wrote, "I was painting and I went to the [Alte] Pinakothek in Munich every day" (Sawelson-Gorse 1993:100). It is interesting to note that the only other painting that Duchamp mentions seeing and admiring at the Alte Pinakothek, aside from Lucas Cranach the Elder's *Adam and Eve*, was El Greco's *Laocoön*, which had been on loan to the museum from the Berlin collector Paul Cassirer since July 1911 (Goldberg 1996:19). On 14 April 1945, upon reminiscing with James Johnson Sweeney about his Munich period, Duchamp described this apocalyptic scene of the naked Trojan priest and his sons wrestling with serpents in a pulsating landscape as "a wonderful thing" (Sweeney 1945). Of great importance, but with a profane disposition towards

Doménikos Theotokópoulos (Venetian Greece, 1541-1614). *Laocoön*, c. 1610. Oil on canvas, 138 x 173. Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art.





Honoré Daumier
(France, 1808-1879).
Ancient History - Plate 1:
The Conqueror Menelaus,
Le Charivari 22.12.1841.
 Lithograph on wove paper, 24 x 19.
 Paris, FR: Bibliothèque nationale
 de France.

Homer was Honoré Daumier. Of the 50 lithographs of the *Ancient History* series that he published in *Le Charivari* between December 1841 and January 1843, seven are of Homeric subject – *The Conqueror Menelaus* (22/12/1841); *The Despair of Calypso* (1842); *Presentation of Odysseus to Nausicaä* (1842); *The Nights of Penelope - The Return of Odysseus - Penelope's Nights before the Return of Odysseus* (24/4/1842); *Penelope's Nights after the Return of Odysseus* (26/6/1842). Daumier used the series to satirise the classical education generally dispensed by the scholastic institutions of the time and simultaneously to poke fun at the ‘ennobling’ references in history painting to the art of ancient Greece and at the academic standards of ideal beauty defended by various scholars, from Winckelmann to Quatremère de Quincy, secretary in perpetuity of the Académie des Beaux-Arts from 1816 to 1839 (Le Men 1999:197). With reference to the Homeric epics, he used classical symbol and allegory anachronistically to deride the classical didactics as a means to criticise contemporary events – the terrible events of revolutionary Paris. In his *Causeries*, the painter Gigoux recorded that Daumier undertook the task of translating in his own inimitable fashion the works of Homer. He may possibly have had access to Baresté’s translation of the *Iliad*, which is sometimes parodied in the verses of the captions and of which an edition illustrated by Nanteuil was published in 1841 (*ib.* 1999:198).

As explained in the notice introducing the series, which appeared in *Le Charivari* on 22 December 1841, Daumier’s reinvention of antiquity recasts the ancients in modern guise; the notice presents the artist as the *alter ego* of Ingres, drawing upon the same source but employing another language and elaborates the fiction of a Daumier who had travelled in search of the ‘original Greek feeling’, ‘Alone, with

no scientific purpose, Daumier has travelled throughout Greece, taking inspiration where a pleasant memory captivated him, weeping where a moving tradition awaited him. Sketching day and night, he eventually discovered the original Greek feeling, of which we offer the first evidence in *The Conqueror Menelaus*.” (notice reproduced in Le Men 1999:199). Once the series was complete, Daumier was ironically presented as “an accomplished neoclassicist, who had succeeded in reinstating Greek art in an album worthy of the excavations of Aegina” (*ib.* 1999:199).

The aforementioned notice concludes with a humorous description of the first plate, *The Conqueror Menelaus*. Against the smoking ruins of Troy, the image shows “the blond Helen ... more beautiful than ever with modesty and love” – a harpy reminiscent of Madame Fribochon or Mère Ubu – strutting along on the arm of her noble husband Menelaus, “son of the gods” and cuckold, at whom she thumbs her nose, a gesture directed equally at the public, “We are aware that, like any new interpretation, this innocent and naïve composition will have its detractors. Perhaps some ignorant individuals will reproach Helen for a certain gesture, which, in our perverted society, signifies something altogether different from modest remorse. Well, this gesture is full of local colour and Daumier has seen the descendants of the Hellenes make it with charming grace before the Bavarian monarch – proof of the respectful feelings the gesture has always embodied in this poetic country.” (*ib.* 1999:199). *Le Charivari* announced to its subscribers that Daumier will just as faithfully interpret mythology, the Golden Age, Greek history and Roman history, in fact the whole of antiquity – “A sublime collection, a superhuman masterpiece, of which the real title should be: ‘the heroic era revealed.’” (*ib.* 1999:200).

The French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) described Daumier’s *Ancient History* series as a blasphemy against the artistic standards of grand history painting on mythological subjects and the academic values upheld by the Institut and the École des beaux-arts, as well as by the Salon jury – “The *Ancient History* seems to me to be important because it is, so to say, the best paraphrase of the famous line ‘Who will rid us of the Greeks and the Romans?’ Daumier came down brutally on antiquity – on false antiquity, that is, for no one has a better feeling than he for the grandeurs of antiquity. He snapped his fingers at it. The hot-headed Achilles, the cunning Odysseus, the wise Penelope, Telemachus, that great booby and the fair Helen, who ruined Troy – they all of them, in fact, appear before our eyes in a farcical ugliness that is reminiscent of those decrepit old tragic actors whom one sometimes sees taking a pinch of snuff in the wings. It was a very amusing bit of blasphemy and one that had its usefulness. I remember a lyric poet of my acquaintance [Théodore de Banville] – one of the ‘pagan school’ – being deeply indignant at it. He called it sacrilege and spoke of the fair Helen as others speak of the Blessed Virgin.” (Charles Baudelaire in “Quelques caricaturistes français,” 1857; reproduced in Baudelaire 1964:178-179). As Baudelaire’s text indicates, *Ancient History* made mock of the ridiculous heroic postures and theatricality that no longer convinced anyone and that were, moreover, the target of the *Sketches of Expressions* and *Tragico-Classical Faces* series, both inspired by the world of the theatre. Despite such an attack on academism, the culture of modernity remained fascinated with Homer.

The Greek artist Démétrius Galanis, who had been successful publishing cartoons in Paris with various magazines up in the period 1901-1921, was known to Duchamp as he himself made a living by publishing illustrations in the *Courrier français* and *Le Rire* (1905-1910). Moreover, Galanis participated along with Moreau in the *Noir & Blanc* group exhibition at Galerie B. Weill in 1919, with Picabia in an avant-garde Salon of the same year (*Revue des Beaux-Arts*, 16 December 1919), with Matisse in 1931 and 1933 and with Jacques Villon in 1958. Galanis engaged with Homeric subjects throughout his career and his best such work is arguably his illustrations of 1926 for the poetic drama *Polyphemus* by Albert Samain (1858-1900), a French poet and writer of the Symbolist school. However, his earliest known illustrations of this subject are his three original woodcuts for Jean-Léon du Bourgneuf's guide *Promenades among the Phaeacians* of 1917. Of course, this publication postdates Duchamp's interview. Nevertheless, the Société archéologique et historique de l'Orléanais copy of the book with the author's handwritten dedication is inscribed "To my dear mother in memory of her travel to the countries of Homer", which evokes the sentiment for such places at the time.

The French artist Odilon Redon was admired by prominent modern artists like Henri Matisse and Kees van Dongen. Walter Pach (1883-1958), an American artist closely affiliated with the Section d'Or group, who met Redon in 1910, introduced him to the United States. As one of the organisers of the 1913 Armory Show, Pach showed Redon in a room of his own with 38 paintings, drawings and prints. Next to Duchamp, all of whose nine paintings found purchasers, Redon excelled in sales. Among the buyers was John Quinn (1870-1924), who formed a representative collection of Redon's works and whose estate was managed by Duchamp. Duchamp said to Pach, "if I am to tell what my own point of departure has been, I should say that it was the art of Odilon Redon" (Pach 1938:163). Therefore, it is of interest to see what it was in Redon's art that could have influenced Duchamp at the time. He was drawn to represent classical mythological subjects like the beauties Venus and Andromeda and Pandora, as well as the beasts Pegasus, Cyclops and the Siren. He approached such subjects with an unparalleled agony and passion. In a diary for 1908, he spoke of art as an experience of "the sacred torment whose source is in the unconscious and the unknown" (Morland 1922:105). Of interest here is *Les origines* (*The Origins*) of 1883, Redon's portfolio of eight lithographic prints, representing evolution before man. For this series, he was inspired by Armand Clavaud, a romantic botanist who was experimenting one moment with the life of the most delicate plant and the next was reading aloud from the poems of Edgar Allan Poe or Baudelaire. Likewise, Redon, who was fascinated by science, allowed fantasy to permeate his work. Describing *Origines* as "allying the monstrous with the majestic" (*La Vie moderne*, 26 August 1882) the reviewer for *La Vie moderne* directly echoed the assessment of Redon's oeuvre made earlier by Hannequin, who claimed for Redon the invention of a new mythology (*Odilon Redon* 1994:158). For plate #3 he drew from the fiercely primitive and man-eating Polyphemus in the ancient source of the *Odyssey*. Instead of being respectful of and faithful to the original text, however, Redon created *The Misshapen Polyp*, a new version of the notorious Polyphemus that reveals a naïve and child-like aspect. He described this creature as "a sort of smiling and hideous Cyclops, floated on the shores". He transformed an apparently repellent monster into a seemingly benevolent being. He mitigated the raw horror of Polyp's primitive face and its hideous characteristics with an ecstatic eyeball and a glowing smile that connects him to the viewer, rather than the opposite. This makeover of established depiction reveals Redon's tendency to merge classical theme with highly subjective vision, thus making it his very own. Such an individuation of antique subject matter would greatly appeal to an emerging radical artist like Duchamp.



Démétrius Galanis
(Greece, 1879-1966).
Jean-Léon du Bourgneuf,
"Promenades chez les Phéaciens" -
L'Île d'Ulysse, 1917.
Wood engraving, 29 x 23.
Orléanais, FR: Bibliothèque de la
Société archéologique et historique.



Odilon Redon
(France, 1840-1916).
The Origins, Plate #3:
The Misshapen Polyp Floated on
the Shores, a Sort of Smiling and
Hideous Cyclops, 1883.
Lithograph on paper, 21 x 20.
Paris, FR: Bibliothèque
Nationale de France.

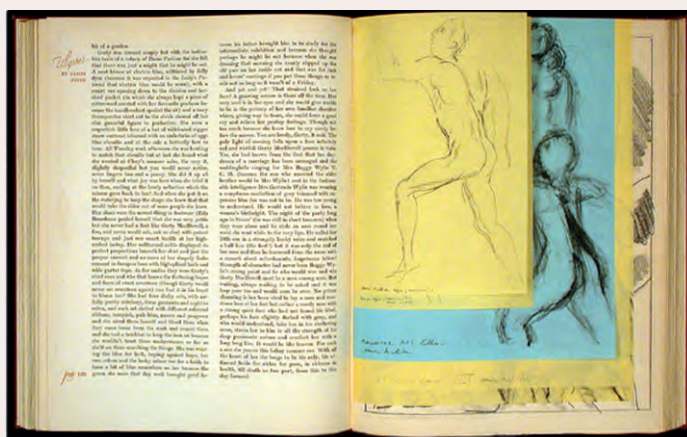


Auguste Rodin (France, 1840-1917). *Polyphemus, Acis and Galatea*, 1888. Plaster, 30 x 17 x 22. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | Auguste Ottin (France, 1811-1890). *Polyphemus surprising Acis and Galatea*, 1852-1863. Bronze and marble. Paris, FR: Jardins du Luxembourg.

The great modern artist Auguste Rodin was respected as the one who had rescued art from the bog of Romanticism. He had formidable influence especially on Duchamp-Villon, as his Rodinesque *Portrait of M. Duchamp* of 1904 (Collection Dr Robert Juline, Paris) exemplifies. Still, any modern artist in Paris, who would like to catch up with developments in the arts, would follow Rodin's work. The *Odyssey* and Homer have a special place in the universe of Rodin. A figure with which perhaps he had a syndrome of identification is Homer for his creative mastery (Christina Buley-Urbe in *Rodin : La lumière de l'Antique* 2013:214), but even more so Odysseus for his use of wit and strength to make it through obstacles while trying to reach Ithaca. In the late 1890s, Rodin made a large series of watercolour drawings directly from the model, dedicated to the *Odyssey* (see pp. 79 & 124). Thanks to their annotations, the sole sturdy naked male wearing a long beard, represented therein, is sometimes referred to by the artist as Odysseus. These could well be studies of the artist's self-portrait at the age of 58. Even better known are his several sculptured versions in various sizes of *Polyphemus*, all dating from 1888, the culmination of which was included on his epic masterpiece *The Gates of Hell* (1880-1917). His initial version, *Polyphemus, Acis and Galatea*, relates the myth about the Cyclops' ferocious jealousy of the nymph Galatea's love for the shepherd Acis. When Polyphemus saw the lovers together, he hurled a rock at them in a fit of rage, crushing Acis and forcing Galatea to jump into the sea. Rodin represents him trying to free the rock with his bent leg. This subject was arguably inspired by Auguste Ottin's sculptural group *Polyphemus surprising Acis and Galatea* of 1852-1863 that adorns *The Medici Fountain* of the Luxembourg Garden in the 6th *arrondissement* of Paris. This monumental fountain was built in about 1630 by Marie de Médicis, the widow of King Henry IV of France and regent of King Louis XIII of France. Owing to Baron Haussmann's improvement plans to build the Rue de Médicis in 1864, it was moved to its present location and extensively rebuilt. The new architect, Alphonse de Gisors (1796-1866), changed the fountain's centrepiece by removing the statue of Venus and installing in its place Ottin's group of statues, representing the giant Polyphemus discovering the lovers Acis and Galatea. The fountain's architecture in Italian mannerist style provided a suitable frame for Ottin's ensemble. Against a nymphaeum of rockwork, the one-eyed Cyclops crouches above the rocky grotto in which Galatea lies in the arms of Acis, who leans on his elbow in the manner of a river god, which he is just about to become. Though this scene lacks any aggressive gesture, the discrepancy of the figures' size and the difference of material – oxidising bronze for the giant and pure white marble for the lovers – accentuate the ethical incompatibility between the two. Rodin's version was originally intended as a group for *The Gates of Hell*, but instead, Polyphemus appears alone on the final appearance of his masterpiece, in the centre of the right panel. As such, the ferocious Cyclops, who is known to terrorise every other, like Acis and Galatea, as well as Odysseus and his companions, embodies the archetype of absolute incivility. The fact that Duchamp admired Rodin is evidenced in his *Selected Details after Rodin* of 1968.

Finally, despite being mentioned by Duchamp in the 1915 interview, Henri Matisse was not amongst those artists that may have influenced his *Glass*, but he engaged with Homeric subjects before this work's mending in 1936. Trained with Gustave Moreau, Matisse would have been familiar with his teacher's epic lifework. However, he notoriously refrained from classical subject matter or method and chose instead to serve “an art of balance, or purity and serenity” (Matisse 1995:65) by disregarding perspective, abolishing shadows and repudiating illusionism. By 1905 he led Fauvism, which was characterised by spontaneous response to nature and life and rough execution that allowed the use of vibrant colours directly from the tube. At the time Duchamp expressed a reversal of opinions, Matisse shunned great epic themes, choosing instead to represent everyday life from nature. It was not until his 66th year, in 1935, when George Macy, of The Limited Editions Club, commissioned Matisse to illustrate Joyce's *Ulysses*. The result was “One of the very few American *livres de peintres* issued before the Second World War” (Garvey 1961:197). The artist chose to take six subjects from Homer's *Odyssey* to produce six soft-ground etchings and twenty preliminary sketches on blue and yellow paper. According to Philippe Sollers, Joyce was initially pleased that an artist of Matisse's stature was to illustrate *Ulysses*. But after some consideration, he became worried that the Frenchman might not be familiar enough with the Irish terrain to do the job. He attempted to have a friend in Ireland send the artist an illustrated weekly from Dublin around 1904. Although legend has it that Matisse began and finished *Ulysses* in one evening, he later admitted that he never read Joyce's novel and instead reread Homer's *Odyssey*. When Joyce discovered that Matisse had actually depicted six episodes from the ancient prototype, he was enraged and refused to sign any more than 250 of the 1500 printed copies. Later, however, he even seemed quite satisfied with the result since he bought a number of copies of the book that was published on 22 October 1935 (www.jamesjoyce.ie/on-this-day-2-may/). Be it as it may, Duchamp would have been aware at the time of the resulting art book. By coincidence, he came close to the Matisse family, when in 1954 he married Alexina Sattler (1906-1995), the wife from 1929 through 1949 of Pierre Matisse, art dealer and youngest son of the artist. Duchamp's stepson Paul Matisse was the one to edit and supervise the posthumous publication of *Marcel Duchamp: Notes* in 1980.

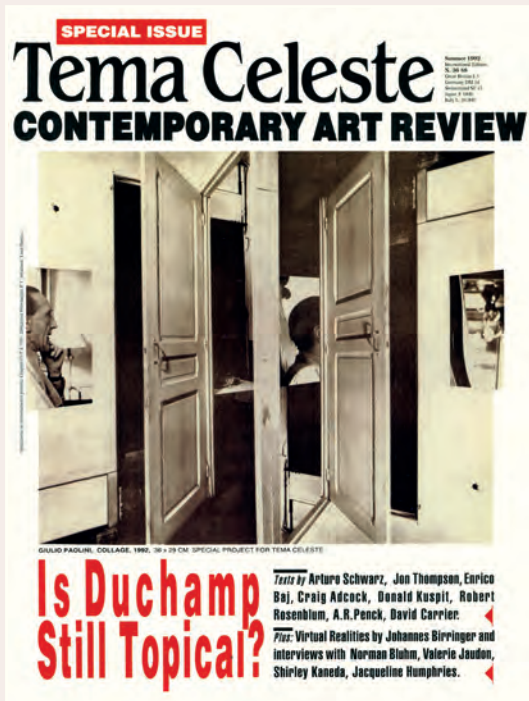
As demonstrated above, every aspect of the visual arts in which Duchamp emerged was literally infested with Homeric themes. In this spirit, then, it may well be that Duchamp codifies in the *Glass* oblique references to Homer, much in the style that Joyce's *Ulysses* does in literature. Even in the knowledge of his disregard for academism, Duchamp would likely be influenced by the vogue for Homer. If that was so, he took extra care to conceal the expression of such influences in his declared ‘underground’ manner, because he is not known to have made any statements with reference to Homer. In lieu of such statements, the only means left is to investigate the Homeric traces of his thought as manifested in his own work (see part II)..



Henri Matisse (France, 1869-1954). Illustration for James Joyce's *Ulysses: Odysseus and Nausicaä*, 1935. Soft-ground etchings in book, 28 x 21. Canberra, AU: National Museum of Australia.

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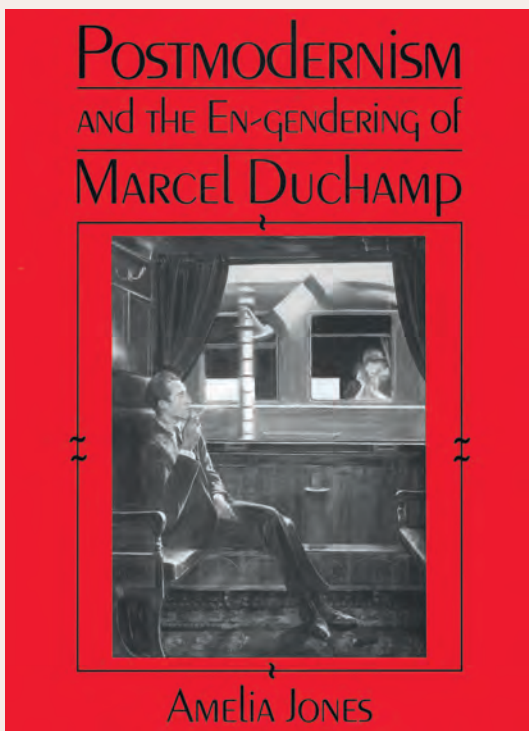
Duchamp's Postmodernism



“Is Duchamp Still Topical?” on the cover for *Tema Celeste* - *Contemporary Art Review* 36 (Summer 1992). Torino, IT: Fondazione Giulio e Anna Paolini.

Postmodernism may be perceived as the 20th century's fringe attempt to institutionalise irrationality, uncertainty and fluidity, to embrace scepticism, subjectivity and indifference and ultimately to challenge and problematise authorities of all kinds. It emerged in the 1960s as a distinct cultural phenomenon, owes its origins to its preceding movement of Modernism and is now well of age. Unlike the monolithic myth of Modernism and the dissolution of its oppressive progression of great ideas and great masters (Wallis 1984:xiii), Postmodernism essentially claims that history is neither singular nor evolutionary, but there is a plurality of stories to tell, while each story has the capacity to transcend linear chronology. Despite being before its time, one of these stories is about Marcel Duchamp, who prematurely placed art at the threshold of a new era, one that is still haunting. It is interesting to look back at 1977, when the Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne presented its inaugural exhibition entitled *L'Œuvre de Marcel Duchamp*, which was organised by the then curator Jean Clair (b. 1940). Significantly, this exhibition was a statement that Modernism has, above all other artists, to do with Duchamp. However, to pigeonhole Duchamp as a modernist, only because he emerged within its time frame, is too conventional. Actually, in 1973, Robert Smithson claimed, “Duchamp is more in line with Postmodernism insofar as he is very knowledgeable about modernist traditions but disdains them” (Roth and Katz 1998:85). Such a claim, out of place and time, raises an issue of untimeliness, that something is wrong with the institutional conception of periodisation. Even Duchamp acknowledged this paradox when he argued that François Rabelais (1494-1553) and Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) are of a Dada disposition (Tomkins 1996:73). This goes to propose that one must think

outside the box. As Romanian literary critic Matei Călinescu wrote, period terms function heuristically, as strategic constructs by which to articulate the continuum of history for the purpose of making sense of the complex situations (Călinescu 1987:7). This chapter will aim to answer what was it about Duchamp that made him retrospectively postmodern? Moreover, if Duchamp's *Glass* relates to Homer's *Odyssey*, might his alignment with Postmodernism resonate with Homeric sensibility?



Cover for Amelia Jones' *Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp* (1994), featuring Mark Tansey's *The Enunciation* (1992).

In her review of Octavio Paz' *Appearance Stripped Bare* (1978), American academic Rosalind Krauss was the first to announce, “Duchamp is the artist of Postmodernism” (Krauss 1979:619). Leading art practitioners – Arturo Schwarz, Jon Thompson, Enrico Baj, Craig Adcock, Donald Kuspit, Robert Rosenblum, A.R. Penck and David Carrier – answered affirmatively in the 1992 special issue of *Tema Celeste's* question “Is Duchamp Still Topical?” Duchamp may be considered to be Postmodernism's primary originator, for he puzzled the establishment by producing and presenting art like never seen before, as his *Fountain* of 1917. From the beginning of his career until well “in the 1950s Duchamp was still operating at the edge of an art world that would embrace him only in the mid-1960s, creating an adulation that has continued to grow since his death” (Henderson 1998:222). Reflecting on his work, the feeling is that Duchamp is ahead of his time. For at least this once, history should examine his art programmatically rather than merely chronologically. With regard to chronology, Duchamp died in 1968; the decade in which Postmodernism is said to have emerged. However, the programme of Duchamp is in every way postmodern; known as ‘anti-art’ and thought of as ‘meta-art’. The former is a tendency to oppose academic art practice, while the latter is a disposition to perceive art anew. The work of Duchamp is evidence of a new conjunction of the what, how and why to create.

The American academic Amelia Jones published *Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp* in 1994, which analysed the visual arts since the 1960s. Her book's cover features Mark Tansey's *The Enunciation* of 1992 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), showing a cross section of two train coaches

travelling parallel to each other in between a blurred signpost – the one in the foreground carries Marcel indifferently smoking while staring into the void, the other in the background shows Rose looking longingly at the viewer from the window. If there is anything this picture enunciates, other than the simultaneous events in different spatial locations based on Einstein's *Special Theory of Relativity* of 1905, it is the en-gendering of Duchamp. Jones' basic premise is that Duchamp is a major source of interest for

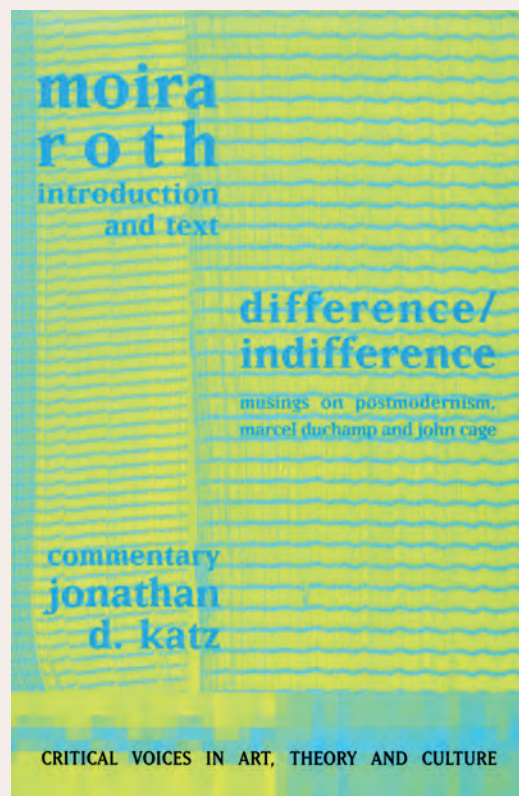
contemporary artists and historians as the “origin of radical postmodern practices” (Jones 1994:xi). She claimed, “Duchamp is the ‘God’ ensuring Postmodernism’s immanent (transcendental) radicality, as well as its apotheosis” (*ib.* 1994:29). But just what is it that Postmodernism stands for? Jones responded, “The progressivity of [...] its inherent resistance to the perceived authoritarianism, exclusionism and masculinism of Modernism.” (*ib.* 1994:xi). So, in this respect, Duchamp emerged as an exceptional individual that is characteristically resistant (anti-) to art, authority, bourgeoisie, dogma, heroism, masculinity, macho and ultimately Modernism.

In their joint 1998 book, *Difference/Indifference: Musings on Postmodernism*, Moira Roth and Jonathan D. Katz brought back Duchamp from the dead, like Virgil in *The Divine Comedy*, to be their guide into the postmodernist moments and authorise queer and feminist readings of them. For Roth, Duchamp was the European father figure of the notion she called ‘aesthetic of indifference’ (Roth and Katz 1998:4), a positive cult of apolitical and generally neutral stance in dealing with an uncertain world (*ib.* 1998:37), becoming a major influence on such artists as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. In this postmodern aesthetic of sexuality and difference, Rose Sélavy served as symbol of new sexual and artistic freedoms and flexibilities (*ib.* 1998:37). For Katz, Duchamp dominated a set of decentering discourses that include an appreciation and understanding of the civil rights movement, feminism, lesbian and gay liberation and a host of social activist movements that challenge grand cultural narratives (*ib.* 1998:154). Katz concluded that Duchamp succeeded because he destabilised the operations of power discreetly – “Duchamp had found a way to critique the natural without marking himself off as its enemy” (*ib.* 1998:62).

Duchamp’s Postmodernism is given. In her diary notes Moira Roth wrote, “[Duchamp] insinuated his way into Postmodernism. Now he’s on the top floor of Postmodernism.” (*ib.* 1998:125). Being ahead of his time, he emerged as a promising renewing force in culture. It was all too brave of him to break with his contemporary avant-garde movement and choose the lonely yet radical underground way of the true revolutionary. He was loaded with great self-confidence that paved the long way to the deserved recognition much later in his life. It only turned out that he became even more topical posthumously than when he was alive.

As the relation of Duchamp to Postmodernism is consolidated, it remains to be seen how his lifework, the *Glass*, compares to an ancient model, Homer’s *Odyssey* and its counterpart, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, both of which have likewise challenged their own timeframe in literary history. As Arthur Machen observed, the *Odyssey* is a reference point for world literature throughout time, surpassing the bounds of its age and land (Machen 1960:41). Believing Postmodernism to be an ideal diffuse phenomenon escaping definitions and eluding chronological confines, Umberto Eco suggested, “soon the postmodern category will include Homer” (Eco 1984:66). Although this comment may be ironic for the ever-expanding category of Postmodernism, Eco invites the analysis of irony. He deliberately invoked Homer. He knew that works boasting to be postmodern while actually being irrelevant abound. The fact that Homer used the pre-existing oral tradition to reconstruct it in his epics meets the condition of Postmodernism, which is the creative imitation of the old and its fruitful transformation in the new. Despite its precocity in written literature, Homer’s work is conceptually advanced and interests theorists of Postmodernism. Due to the circumstances of its creation, it cannot be identified with Postmodernism, but may be anachronistically examined under its light. As known, Postmodernism relates to architecture, visual arts, theatre, cinema, prose and any critical writing, but not poetry. It is interesting that the techniques of Homer’s poetry apply especially to the theatre and cinema – *visual reference* by the focus/distance from the object, the option of viewing lens, the motion in space and the viewing angle; *storytelling construction* with cuts and transitions, rhythm and cutting speed; and *handling of time* with compression, flashbacks, fast forward, slow motion, etc. (Delebecque 1958). The fact is that the reading of the past in terms of the present may lead to misrepresentation. However, pointing out the similarity of elements of the past with the present is prudent, fair and useful.

Homer was an incomparable writer and dramatist. Not only does he narrate, but creates characters and shapes relationships between them. The relationship of his two great epics with the public is also not at random but targeted. The *Iliad* is addressed to the classes of aristocrats, warriors and generally men of the Greek world. The *Odyssey* is addressed to the classes of traders, artists, craftsmen and generally women of the Greek world. With important representatives Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1900-1974) and Johannes Th. Kakridis (1901-1992), the neoanalytic philologists claim that: a) The unity of the two epics is undeniable. b) Homer completes a long oral tradition and simultaneously opens up a new literate era. c) In the composition of his poems, Homer uses older sources, which he assimilates creatively, but also adds many of his own



Cover for Moira Roth and Jonathan D. Katz' *Difference/Indifference: Musings on Postmodernism* (1998).

innovations that make his work both traditional and original. Regarding the second point (b), Homer's epics are a hymn to the alphabet and the acrophonic thematic structure. Proof of this is the fact that between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* there are intertextual encounters, while in Book 22 of both epics the respective alphabetical letter 'X' serves as an optical and conceptual symbol that concerns the final confrontation of heroes (Valaoritis 2010). Regarding the third point (c), Homer shows the way of appropriation, the deliberate reworking of images and styles from earlier, well-known works of art, which is the hallmark of Postmodernism. It could well be that Duchamp came up with the idea of *readymades*, the mass-produced article selected by an artist and displayed as a work of art, by studying Homer's example.

Elements of Homer's advanced sensibility, which are close to the interests, perspectives and attitudes of Duchamp, will be researched below. These elements may be seen to formulate the potential characteristics of Postmodernism – namely pastiche, parody, antiheroism, pacifism, feminism, metapoetry, impersonality, alterity, irrationalism, appropriation, aesthetics of chance, conceptualism, interdisciplinarity, fusion and playfulness – as intuitively gathered.

i.- Pastiche: Fredric Jameson has famously defined pastiche as “the disappearance of the individual subject, along with its formal consequence, the increasing unavailability of the personal style” (Jameson 1991:16), which is the main characteristic of Postmodernism. Homer's epics are characterised by a wealth of heterogeneity in their narratological techniques. Irene de Jong, who investigated issues of narrativity in the *Odyssey*, distinguished three main features. First, the continuity of time principle and the ‘interlace’ technique, according to which three storylines – *Odyssey*, *Telemachia* and *Ithakeiad* – are handled skilfully with interruptions, merges and switching by the narrator (de Jong 2001:589). Second, the piecemeal distribution of the *nostoi* (homecomings) of Odysseus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, which are distributed over Nestor, Menelaus and Odysseus with narratological techniques – analepsis, embedded storytelling, regression, fill-in, interlace, interruption, juxtaposition, mirroring, misdirection and retardation – that masterfully build suspense and tension (*ib.* 2001:593). Third, the recurrent elements of Odysseus' lying tales, wherein the speaker is pretending to be somebody else, which may confuse the main story, but makes the eventual *catharsis* all the more essential (*ib.* 2001:596). Of course, while Homer demonstrates in his epics erudition and philosophical thought, the postmodern epic works of Joyce and Duchamp deliberately relate to contemporary everyday life and are limited to their subjectivism. In every other respect, they mimic the narrative tropes of Homer. In a similar way to the ‘interlace’ technique in the *Odyssey*, the course of action in both *Ulysses* and the *Glass* is labyrinthine. In the first, intertwine the itineraries of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus. In the second, is described the countercurrent journeys of the Illuminating Gas and the Language of the Bride (see III.4). Moreover, by analogy with the piecemeal distribution of the *nostoi* in the *Odyssey*, Joyce chose to use a different style for the majority of the 18 Episodes in *Ulysses* – the stream of consciousness style that changes focus wildly in Episode 3 - *Proteus*; the segmented newspaper-style with an abundance of rhetorical figures and devices in Episode 7 - *Aeolus*; the vignettes style depicting the wanderings of various characters through Dublin in Episode 10 - *Wandering Rocks*; the musical motifs style in Episode 11 - *Sirens*; the style of legal jargon, Biblical passages and elements of Irish mythology in Episode 12 - *Cyclops*; the romance magazines and novelettes style of Episode 13 – *Nausicaä*; the play script style with stage directions in Episode 15 - *Circe*; the rambling and laboured style in Episode 16 - *Eumaeus*; the catechetical style of questions and answers in Episode 17 - *Ithaca*; the inner monologue technique in eight sentences without punctuation in Episode 18 - *Penelope*. The plethora of narratological techniques is expressed on the *Glass* pictorially with its different materials – oil, lead foil and wire, aluminium foil, mirror silvering, dust, varnish, glass panels and strips, wood and steel. In closing, the lying tales of Odysseus, which aim to cause confusion, find their analogue in *Ulysses* Episode 14 - *Oxen of the Sun*, where Joyce employs a style that recapitulates the entire Babelic history of the English language – latinate prose, Anglo-Saxon alliteration, parodies of Malory, the King James Bible, Bunyan, Defoe, Sterne, Walpole, Gibbon, Dickens, Carlyle and contemporary slang. An analogous, obscure and jarring mix on the *Glass* is expressed visually with the perspectiveless organic upper part and the perspectival artificial lower part (see III.2). Such a quality further resembles the *Odyssey's* interposing between realism and imagination, as well as the merging of reality with hallucination throughout Joyce's *Circe* episode (Joyce 1934:15.422-596). That is what Professor Brian McHale called ‘parallax of discourses’ in *Ulysses* that dissolves the world into a plurality of incommensurable worlds (McHale 1992:51). Richard Ellmann saw the *Eumaeus*' episode text as a fabric of “bloomisms” (Ellmann 1972:151), while Professor McHale found that it displays a “discursive parallax [...] a whole range of discourses echoing in the English language of Bloom's (and Joyce's) time and place” (McHale 1992:54). This allows the challenging transference from the characters of naturalistic Dublin to the unnaturalistic worlds of adjacent parodies – the grandiose public execution (Joyce 1934:12.303-307), the high-society wedding attended by trees (*ib.* 1934:12.321). This parallax of discourses is ‘ontological perspectivism’ that is characteristic of Postmodernism, where it may be traced through carnivalesque, collage and

cut-up or fold-in texts (McHale 1992:55). A similar disorienting mobility of the world may also be discerned on the *Glass*, where its two parts at the same time compete and complement one another in terms of unworldliness.

- ii.- Parody: Parody is related to pastiche and as such is a significant feature in Postmodernism (Jameson 1983:113). It aims at humorous mimicry of grand styles or mannerisms with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect. The *Iliad* is a tragedy full of sad episodes. The *Odyssey* is a comedy and as such parodies the *Iliad*. It is full of tragic episodes that are highlighted with comic tone. All the blunders of Odysseus, but also his companions and the suitors, which cause their suffering or cost their lives, are comical. All the songs of the bards resemble the modern sense of the soap opera. Some cause Penelope and Odysseus to weep, others are fun, such as the myth about the cuckoldry of Hephaestus. Moreover, reaching the verge of the macabre Hades, Odysseus meets with surprise Elpenor complaining that because of him he cannot pass the gates of the underworld and obliges him to tell the story he ought to know. Indeed, he views as comic even the most tragic episode, the slaughter of the suitors. After their souls get to Hades, Agamemnon is startled with the overcrowding and asks them, “What befell you?” (Lattimore 1965:24.106). Moreover, three episodes of the *Odyssey* are cast in the comic mode. First, when Odysseus’ myth-ridden *Apologoi* end, Alcinoos responded, “we as we look upon you do not imagine / that you are a deceptive or thievish man” (*ib.* 1965:11.363-364). Subsequently, pretending to be a fugitive slayer of Orsilochos, Athena admitted, “You wretch, so devious, never weary of tricks, then you would not / even in your own country give over your ways of deceiving / and your thievish tales. They are near to you in your very nature.” (*ib.* 1965:13.293-295). Finally, disguising himself as a veteran from the Trojan war, made Eumaeus react, “Why should such a man as you are / lie recklessly to me?” (*ib.* 1965:14.364-365). The king’s naïve affirmation, the goddess’ good-humoured criticism and the commoner’s scepticism could be regarded as substitute expressions of the reader or listener’s informed response to Odysseus’ lying tales. In a similar way, the *Glass*’ viewer is aware that its author intended it as “a hilarious Picture” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30), that is a parody of the Bride. What is more, Odysseus’ hitherto unheard of complain to Athena – “there was a time when you were kind to me [...] But after [...] I never saw you” (Lattimore 1965:13.314, 316, 317) – may be considered an attack on theocracy, quite similar to Duchamp’s choice to include a priest among the horny Bachelors. Moreover, parody is at the centre of Duchamp’s work. Amelia Jones claimed that he enacted “a parody of gender” by playing the codes of femininity as a man to thwart the norms of bourgeois sexual identity (Jones 1994:163-164). What is more, Odysseus features as a favourite actor in satyr plays of the three Athenian tragedians – Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, as well as in comedies of Aristophanes. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche mourned the fact that the old theatre gave way to the new, which “put on stage the faithful mask of reality” (Nietzsche 1999:55) and that “In the hands of the new poets Odysseus, the typical Hellene of older art, now sank to the level of the Graeculus figure who, as a good-natured and cunning domestic slave, is at the centre of dramatic interest from now on.” (*ib.* 1999:55). This *graeculus*, literally meaning little Greek, is a stock figure of contempt in Roman literature (notably by Juvenal 3.77-8) and, as such, is very close to the *hommelette* (little man) that is Ulysses’ Leopold Bloom (see I.7) and the homunculus that is the *Glass*’ Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity (see III.15). An early visual manifestation of such parody is the Mystae Painter’s *Odysseus aboard a pair of Amphorae being blown across the sea by Boreas* of 375 BC (see p. 64).
- iii.- Antiheroism: The concept of antiheroism, which opposes the classical conception of the hero, while fitting the postmodern sensibility of Duchamp, appears in both of Homer’s epics. For instance, at the point in the *Iliad* where Diomedes and Odysseus attack the Trojans treacherously as spies (Lattimore 1951:10.435). Admirable for his bravery and military genius, Diomedes proceeds to kill the king of the Thracians Rhesos in his tent along with twelve of his companions in the Trojan camp during their sleep. At the same time, Odysseus snatches Rhesos’ all-white steeds, which, according to prophecy, if they ate Trojan fodder and drank water from the river Xanthus Troy would not fall. That is, the end justifies the means, even if it is immoral – like the acts of spying and stealing. In the *Odyssey*, although martial virtue gives glory to heroes, the protagonist warrior of the *Iliad*, Achilles, surprises the reader/listener with the conscious inversion of traditional values when as a shadow in the *Odyssey* he responds to the honourable words of Odysseus, “I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another / man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on, / than be a king over all the perished dead” (Lattimore 1965:11.489-491). Such words from the archetypal hero stigmatise martial actions and praise peaceful pursuits. Especially the *Odyssey* is an epic narration of the homecoming of a special war hero with parodying character. Homer designed Odysseus to be weaker in strength but stronger in mind than Achilles. He is portrayed as a flawed protagonist who lacks conventional heroic qualities such as idealism, morality and even looks (*ib.* 1965:9.515). While being “the man of many ways” (*ib.* 1965:1.1) he “was driven / far journeys” (*ib.* 1965:1.1-2) because of his pride and arrogance. His multidimensional image includes a hero in decline who is unsuccessful in controlling his men; a trickster who deceives others any chance he gets; a self-deceiver who, with a mixture of bragging

and lament, tries to arouse the sympathy of others as well as boost his own weakened self-confidence; a ladies' man, versed as well in the ways of love; a survivor who is dedicated to life and living it to the full, which also earns him the title of the archetypal adventurer. He disguises throughout the epic and, whenever he uses his own name, he or those he tells usually ends up suffering for his honesty. Yet despite his flaws, Odysseus grows as a person through the course of the epic, yet his growth costs him and those near to him much pain and difficulty. The impotent type that Joyce conceived of for Leopold Bloom (see I.7) and the homunculus that Duchamp designed for the Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity on the *Glass* (see III.14) evoke the postmodern sense of the antihero, akin to Odysseus. In closing, the postmodern concepts of regress and everyday life subjects as opposed to grand narratives are in keeping with and result from the notion of antiheroism.

- iv.- Pacifism: Homer's anti-war sentiment is obvious, yet found in details. Odysseus' reluctance to jeopardise his life in war is implicitly alluded to a number of times in the *Odyssey*, such as in the motif concerning his effort to avoid taking part in the expedition to Troy (*Homeric Contexts* 2012:329). Apollodorus recorded the story of Odysseus trying to avoid fulfilling Halitherses' oracle that he would be away from home for twenty years if he left for war, with the idea of feigned madness (Apollodorus 1921:E.iii.7). Odysseus was one of the original suitors of Helen. Being disadvantaged compared to Menelaus, he helped Helen's father, Tyndareus, settle the dispute for her hand in marriage, in return for which Tyndareus supported Odysseus in his quest to marry his niece, Penelope. He proposed to the candidate suitors to let Helen choose her husband herself provided that all of them pledge the "Oath to Tyndareus" that obliged them to punish any one who would attempt to distract her from her marital base. So, when Paris abducted Helen, the Greek leaders sought to recruit Odysseus in the expedition to Troy. He tried to breach his oath by pretending to be insane. He looked for a way out, donning a peasant cap, yoking together an ox and a horse to his plough and sowing his fields with salt instead of seeds (this would destroy their ability to grow crops). Then, Palamedes, who was renowned for his ingenuity, sought to disprove Odysseus' madness, snatched his infant son from his mother's arms and placed him in front of Odysseus' plough. This prompted Odysseus to stop the deceptive plowing and confess that he is sane. Thus, Odysseus was forced to go to war despite his pacifist character. Of course, Dada (1915-1923) was essentially a self-referential avant-garde movement, but its anti-war overtone was preceded by Guillaume Apollinaire's play *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (*The Breasts of Tiresias*), written in 1903 and performed in 1917, with clear reference to Homeric culture and its pacifist quality. Duchamp was a living example of conscientious objection. Like Odysseus, he was reluctant to take part in any war and fled both World Wars when they broke out – moving from Paris to the United States during the First and from the United States to South America during the Second. Although his beloved brother Raymond fell victim of the Great War, Duchamp never felt vengeance, but was always committed to pacifism. In a little-known interview in the *New York Tribune* for 24 October 1915, he told a reporter, "Personally I must say I admire the attitude of combating invasion with folded arms. Could that become the universal attitude, how simple the intercourse of nations would be!" (quoted in *Dada Surrealism* 1985:134). What is more interesting, however, is the preference that Homer subtly reveals for epic poetry as opposed to martial virtue (Rengakos 2006:180). In the *Odyssey* bards – Phemius in Ithaca, Demodocus in Scheria, an anonymous bard in the palace of Menelaus and Odysseus who is comparable to them in his *Apologoi* (Lattimore 1965:9-12) – enjoy the timeless appreciation and respect of their audience. This preference, which allegorically refers to the arts as an eminently peaceful activity seems to be adopted by Duchamp in his underground preoccupation with the visual arts.
- v.- Feminism: Amelia Jones read Postmodernism as antimasculinist, that is feminised, feminist, effeminate and/or homosexualised (Jones 1994:21). Such a *gynaecocratic* (feminist) worldview may also be rooted in Homer. The significant role that women (Arete, Athena, Calypso, Circe, Eurycleia, Helen, Nausicaä and Penelope) play in the *Odyssey*, which famously led Samuel Butler to propose Homer as an authoress (Butler 1897:8) and the three types of female monsters (Charybdis, Scylla and the Sirens), which test the male protagonist therein, seem to support the poet's strategy to investigate the relationship between the two genders under the light of matriarchy. The odyssey of an archetypal man through a world with a strong female presence becomes the allegory for the initiation in the gradual discovery of the self, on which Homer focuses (Rengakos 2006:175). Such appears to be the interest of Duchamp in the *Glass*. Perhaps for the needs of this initiation he variously identified with Rrose Sélavy as a female alter ego. She seems to embody the archetypal bride by way of feminism, as summarised by Dr Rosemary Radford Ruether – the very embrace of peace, as a courageous resistance to violence and injustice that reaches out to affirm rather than negate humanity (Ruether 1985:73). In this respect Jones found Duchamp's self-presentation to be often interpreted as feminised

and seductively coy (Jones 1994:101). Moreover, the kinship of Duchamp to maternal values may be further seen in David Hopkins's theory that Duchamp's "R. Mutt" mock signature applied on the *Fountain* is an anagrammatism and phonetic reversal of *Mutter*, the German word for mother (Hopkins 1998:71).

- vi.- Metapoetry: In his 1967 essay *Criticism and Crisis*, Paul de Man claimed that the Homeric epic is a self-referential postmodern text (de Man 1971:17). Further to *poetics*, that is worlds built solely by language, Homer proceeded in *metapoetics*, a postmodern term for the multifarious tropes of conceptual writing – *self-referentiality*, wherein the text turns to itself and refers to the conditions of its existence or process of creation; *intertextuality*, wherein the text exists in relation to other preceding texts; *intratextuality*, wherein the text refers to internal relations in the text (Rengakos 2006:158-180). Metapoetry is a literary device used self-consciously and systematically to draw attention to a poem's status as an artefact. Appreciated as postmodern, this strategy of writing poetry poses questions about the relationship between fiction and reality, often using irony and self-reflection. Setting himself in the heart of myth, Homer used invisible codes and conventions, in order to help the reader understand how reality is constructed. His best trope is self-referentiality, which is inherent in the uncertain, self-controversial and culturally pluralistic world of his time. From the postmodern perspective, self-reference is the literary phenomenon in which a text refers directly to its own self via the writer or reader. The act of reading the reader is in the paradoxical position on the one hand to admit that the poetical world is imaginary and artificial and, on the other, to take part imaginatively, mentally or emotively in the text's co-creation. In this way the reader becomes the co-creator of the self-referential text while distancing himself from it because of its self-referentiality. In the *Odyssey* two self-referential points in relation to Homer are of interest. First, the two bards, Phemius and Demodocus, reflect Homer as his idols. But also, when Odysseus actively succeeds Demodocus in the *Apologoi* (Books 9-12), he proves that he can compete with him in his own narrative art. Therefore, in the sense of identification with the author, the reader feels to further identify with the other bards, but also with the main character, Odysseus. Second, is a rare instance in which Homer gives his audience an interactive role. In Book 7, Odysseus narrates to Arete and Alcinous how he was shipwrecked on Ogygia and from there Calypso helped him in his homecoming to Ithaca, but Poseidon took him to Scheria (Lattimore 1965:7.241-297). Fearing a vicious circle of narrative, the poet made a joke about the divine omniscience of the audience in regards to the narrated events. Closing the *Apologoi*, the poet tongue-in-cheek winked to the reader/listener – "Why tell the rest of / this story again, since yesterday in your house I told it / to you and your majestic wife? It is hateful to me / to tell a story over again, when it has been well told." (*ib.* 1965:12.450-454). At this point the poet recognised the dynamics of an audience that can actively synthesise facts in its mind. As the Homeric text transcends conventional linear chronological narrative and the plot's sense is based on the composing capability of the recipients, "the audience and or reader has to infer what is intended from the actions and speeches of the characters in their relations to each other" (Thornton 1970:xv). It follows that the audience has every opportunity to identify with the author, who undertakes to easily slide into different roles from the narrator in the narrated and vice versa. In other words, the author is present and active and interacts with the equally present and active audience. This complex fact is thoroughly affected in both *Ulysses* and the *Glass*, where the recipients are called to actively attend the work and complete its plot in their mind, in keeping with Duchamp's dictum that "it's the viewers who make the pictures" (Duchamp 2008:247). With such metapoetic tropes, the author parodies tradition, assaults the seriousness of the text and protects the timelessness of his work.
- vii.- Impersonality: The *Odyssey's* "Tell me" (Lattimore 1965:1.1) plea to the Muse for inspiration, typical of the oral literature tradition in general, evokes the voice of the omniscient epic narrator rather than a particular bard, alternating objective narrative and speeches rather than yield to the subjective intentions and biographical context of the author (Ford 1992:23). This fact prompted Professor Hall to claim that Homer's impersonal poetic voice produced what Roland Barthes described in his 1968 essay as *Death of the Author/Birth of the Reader* (Hall 2008:22). Professor Nanos Valaoritis noticed a similar lack of narrative voice throughout Joyce's *Eumaeus* episode. Likewise, the *Glass* is aesthetically impersonal, lacking the quality of a signature style and conceptually rife with mind-boggling puzzles. Any reference to authorship is only abstract or cryptic – Joyce fictionalised aspects of his own life in *Ulysses* (Crispi 2015:126), while the conjunction of bride and bachelors in the *Glass'* French title contains an amalgam of Duchamp's first name – MAR(iée) and CÉL(ibataires).
- viii.- Alterity: British scholar Griselda Pollock defined Postmodernism as containing an ostensibly immanent feminist logic. She suggested, "the woman paradigm in art could be seen as the model of rupture, the total other that would finally reconcile aesthetics and politics" (Pollock 1988:160). Concerning womanhood or any notion of otherness, it is precisely through difference – by articulating himself against what he is not – that man defines his postmodern identity. The lesson to be had is that

alterity is a prerequisite of identity and self-effacement is a form of self-assertion. This message also underlay Homer's *Odyssey* where trans identity whether of gender in the case of Athena, or the self in the case of Odysseus, serves the end that justifies the means. This was put into great effect with Duchamp, whose redefinition of the subjective 'I' resulted in the enactment of 'otherness,' what is represented by *masquerades* (see Ades 1992). This kind of ambivalently gendered and shifting authorial identities is what Amelia Jones called "en-gendering of authorship" (Jones 1994:51) and may be termed as *multidentity*. Investigating Duchamp's multiple personae, Moira Roth described his character in life and art as "seemingly chameleon-like" (Roth and Katz 1998:7). Duchamp's ability to slip out of himself and into an 'other' is evoked in his phrase, "I have forced myself to contradict myself in order to avoid conforming to my own taste" (Janis and Janis 1945). In a similar line of thought, Joyce described his protagonist Bloom as the "new womanly man" (Joyce 1934:15.483), an idea likely inspired by the period's woman suffrage movement that led the Irish Free State to give equal voting rights to men and women as of 1922. Unlike feminism, Bloom's 'womanliness' here has to do with knowing what he feels for the other, in this case his wife, which makes him triumph over every other man, including Boylan, in Molly's soliloquy.

- ix.- Irrationalism: Postmodern art tends to affirm irrationalism. Already in his first *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924, Breton regretted rationalism's pretence of civilisation and progress and invited instead people to welcome in the mind everything that may rightly or wrongly be termed superstition, or fancy and be concerned with dreams (Breton 1969:10). Dream sequences were explored as much by Duchamp in the Bride's *Cinematic Blossoming* as by Joyce in the *Penelope* episode. Of course, it must be noted that Homer's epics are replete with haunting imagery from the realms of fantasy – the gates of heaven that via the cloud lead to desired places (Lattimore 1951:5.749); the pair of automaton dogs that Hephaestus crafted to watch over the palace of Alcinous (Lattimore 1965:7.91); the Phaeacian trees whose fruit is ever good and abundant (*ib.* 1965:7.117); the fictitious hybrids Scylla and Charybdis (*ib.* 1965:12.235); the slaughtered Oxen of Helios whose flayed skins crawled and spitted meat bellowed (*ib.* 1965:12.395); the Phaeacian ship whose stern was lifted from speed (*ib.* 1965:13.84). Irrationality is likewise played out on all the mechanic devices of the *Glass* – especially the *Chocolate Grinder* and the *Chariot*.
- x.- Appropriation: Postmodernism questions the originality that Modernism so valued. Appropriation, the use of pre-existing materials with little or no transformation applied to them, is typical of Postmodernism. But Homer himself set the first memorable example; being at the verge when the eponymous poem was about to replace the anonymous one, he appropriated the oral tradition, but also boosted it with further literary enrichment. In so doing, the copy (appropriating) overshadows the original (appropriated) work. Thus, Homer excelled in the two key forms of ancient Greek drama – tragedy and comedy. He combined adventure and imagination, barbarism and civilisation, wildness and tenderness, love and hatred, violence and humanity, sadness and happiness. Homer's unique ability to effectively combine these qualities endowed his appropriated epics with timelessness and ensured their author's immortality. In an effort to explain why Duchamp might have Homer's *Odyssey* in mind when making his *Glass*, or why should Joyce think of Homer in relation to "The most beautiful book that has come out of our country in my time." (Joyce 1934:9.213), or even why should such a notorious anticlassicist as André Breton name his gallery *Gradiva*, after a neo-Attic Roman bas-relief copy of 150 AD in the Museo Chiaramonti, Vatican City State, the answer might be simple. These great *enfants terrible* thought of appropriating the Classics in a new way with a sense of humour, paradox and irony to make their own points as successors to an ancient tradition. The fascination of the avant-garde with ancient devices, such as the arrow and bow (see III.10), may be explained as homeopathy, the doctrine of *similia similibus curentur* (likes cure likes). In this strand of thought, more recently, to deconstruct what he coined *phallogocentrism*, that is Plato's masculinist system of metaphysical oppositions, Derrida mobilised Platonic terminology (Derrida 1981). As Harold Bloom argued on the anxiety of intra-poetic relationships, "Poetic history [...] is indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves" (Bloom 1973:5). Such a 'misread' tactic has always been the Oedipal means by which the poet may overthrow the 'poetic' father. There only happens to be varying levels of concealment; where Joyce was so open about appropriating the *Odyssey* for *Ulysses*, Duchamp seems to have been hermetic about the same source for the *Glass*.
- xi.- Aesthetics of Chance: A Homeric notion of chance may be inferred in the ethical words Zeus uttered at the start of the *Odyssey*, "Oh for shame, how the mortals put the blame upon us / gods, for they say evils come from us, but it is they, rather, / who by their own recklessness win sorrow beyond what is given" (Lattimore 1965:1:32-34). This goes to suggest that man's destination seems to be fated, but his actions along the way are a matter of choice by free will. The ability to act at one's own discretion is wilful, but at the same time connected to unpredictability. In other words, while

Odysseus must eventually return home (*ib.* 1965:1:76), he gets to choose how long it takes and how much he will suffer in the process. Unlike its aforementioned ethical dimension, the aesthetics of chance is typically postmodern as a means of depersonalising all decisions relating to creation and allowing the work to ‘happen’ without predefined intention. Duchamp underlined the significance of chance in *The Green Box* note 5 (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:33). Joyce too, according to Ellmann, “was quite willing to accept coincidence as his collaborator” (Ellmann 1959:662). Both Duchamp and Joyce embraced chance as a means by which to camouflage the threads of their appropriating tradition.

- xii. Conceptualism: Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* begin in the middle of the plot, following a broken, semi and non-linear pattern with details interspersed as flashbacks and reminiscences. Homer established what in modern times is appreciated as nonlinear, disjointed or disrupted narrative, that is largely conceptual. Such a conceptual approach to narrative was emulated by both Roussel and Joyce. The American art critic Clement Greenberg constructed an adversarial relationship between his ideal abstract expressionist aesthetic and the highly threatening Duchampian ‘conceptualism’, which views art as an intellectual project (Jones 1994:6). Conceptual art is generally portrayed as a rejection of aesthetic values as an adequate basis for understanding artistic significance. Duchamp wrote in a letter of 10 November 1962 to Hans Richter, “When I discovered readymades I thought to discourage aesthetics.” (Richter 1965:207). In his book, *The Bride and the Bachelors, Five Masters of the Avant-Garde*, in which Duchamp featured as bride for Cage, Tinguely, Rauschenberg and Cunningham, Calvin Tomkins united these ‘masters’ under an “aesthetic heresy” (Tomkins 1965:4) with which “to break down the barriers that exist between art and life” (*ib.* 1965:2). With *Ulysses* Joyce affected a similar heresy in literature. When Stephen Dedalus reflected to himself, “Ineluctable modality of the visible” (Joyce 1934:3.38), he meant that intellectual thought is more than meets the eye.
- xiii.- Interdisciplinarity: One of Postmodernism’s greatest idea is that of epistemological pluralism that is brought about by interdisciplinary polylogues – each discipline benefiting from being in dialogue with as many other fields as possible. Based on their varying engagement with all arts and sciences – architecture, astronomy, geometry, medicine, literature, philosophy and politics – the epics are proof of Homer’s interdisciplinary omniscience. Duchamp, who said that his notes for the *Glass* were an intrinsic part of it, had also admitted, “Roussel showed me the way” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:126). In 1946 he said to the critic James Johnson Sweeney, “I felt that as a painter it was much better to be influenced by a writer than by another painter” (*ib.* 1973:6). In 1922, meanwhile, Joyce said that his writing owed much to painting (Joyce, quoted in Ellmann 1953:559). An interdisciplinary approach engages works like the *Glass* or *Ulysses* to a further amazing array of fields – astronomy, literature, physics, philosophy, psychoanalysis, sexology and the visual arts. Both Duchamp and Joyce took ideas from various disciplines and twisted them in such a way that they would turn pseudo and thus become their own parodies.
- xiv.- Fusion: Homer’s *Odyssey* may be seen philosophically as an effort to explore the dialectical relationship between the seeming stable conditions of calm at home and the apparent inconstant world of adventure at sea. This bipolarity may be seen to juxtapose epistemology, the study of knowledge and justified belief, with ontology, the study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality. Homer blends the two fields philologically into one harmonious whole. Likewise, postmodern art has a tendency to fuse past and present artistic styles and combine disparate media in innovative and unconventional ways. Being roughly contemporary but different in form, *Ulysses* and the *Glass* happen to breach the modern avant-garde towards what was to follow as Postmodernism. Professor McHale distinguished Modernism from Postmodernism philosophically. The dominant of the former is epistemological and concerned with the interpretation of the world of which one is a part. That of the latter is ontological and acknowledges there is a plurality of worlds and various selves of one to engage with them (McHale 1987:9-10). Based on this distinction, Professor McHale considered Joyce’s *Ulysses* to be an awkward case of literature, whose first half – episodes 1-10, including 18 (*Penelope*) – inaugurates high Modernism, while its remainder – episodes 11-18, including 7 (*Aeolus*) – belongs to Postmodernism (McHale 1992:10, 47). He found the text to be “fissured and double, like a landscape made up of two adjacent but disparate geophysical terrains, brought together by the massive displacement of tectonic plates” (*ib.* 1992:45). The two terrains relate excessively – “the postmodernist chapters exceed the modernist poetics of the ‘normal’ chapters and the postmodernist chapters parody modernist poetics” (*ib.* 1992:45). In the modernist chapters prevails a single narrative form with authorial sentences that project on a stable world and are increasingly replaced by autonomous sentences in the other chapters. The ‘mind-sentences’ of the postmodern part relate to the fragments of a world that is reconstructed from the chapters that precede Molly’s monologue. McHale observed that the modernist *Ulysses* deploys a mobile consciousness against a stable world, whereas its postmodern counterpart parodically substitutes a mobile world (*ib.* 1992:48). What

McHale described as “mobile world [...] without stable landmarks to measure consciousness” (*ib.* 1992:48) evokes the perspectiveless and incommensurable upper part of Duchamp’s *Glass*, the *Bride’s Domain*. Further fusion is evidenced also on the *Glass*’ lower part, the *Bachelor Apparatus*, with the *Chariot* made of rods of emancipated metal (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:56) and the *Chocolate Grinder’s* Louis XV legs (*ib.* 1973:69). Joyce’s Siren-like maids in the bar of the Ormond Hotel perform an extraordinary combination of music and math that he termed ‘musemathematics’ (Joyce 1934:11.274). Both authors appear impelled to compress the entire universe into their work. Of course, as ever, their work is very much informed by their own biography. As of them onwards, however, the seams of the autobiographical or other pieces that form the puzzle that is their work are intentionally exposed, like in the sculptured surfaces of Rodin.

xv.- Playfulness: The *Odyssey* is replete with smiles (Lattimore 1965:2.400; 4.609; 5.181; 13.286; 16.354; 16.476; 17.542; 22.371; 23.112) and laughter of all kinds – inward (*ib.* 1965:9.414; 20.301) and especially outward (*ib.* 1965:8.326; 18.100; 20.346, 358), while Aphrodite is described as “lover of laughter” (*ib.* 1965:8.362). Homer was well aware that such evidence of playfulness provides the comic tone that accentuates tragedy. Though not directly associated with smiling and laughing, postmodern art exhibits overtly its interest in play and games as critical techniques. Traces of this string of thought may be sought in Duchamp’s inspiration to use a toy cannon to help him locate the *Nine Shots* on the *Glass* (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:35). He also described the outcome of stretching the gas to be the result of “Playful Physics” (*ib.* 1973:49). Hilton Kramer argued that postmodern art represents a “decisive shift away from the attitude of high seriousness” that Modernism considered essential (Kramer 1982:37). Ellmann remarked of *Finnegans Wake* that its “mixture of childish nonsense and ancient wisdom had been prepared for by the dadaists and surrealists” (Ellmann 1959:559). This complements Michel Sanouillet’s statement that “perhaps no one was... more spiritually Dada than Marcel Duchamp. In [him] are joined the essential elements of the Dada revolt.” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:6). What is more, the play and games that Duchamp and Joyce affected in their work were ironically tinged by eroticism.

In the light of the above, the *Glass* may safely be perceived as a postmodern work with conceptual affinities to both Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Therefore, the aforementioned works appear to share more in common than the opposite and to discreetly relate to one another. More significantly, Duchamp’s alignment with Postmodernism seems to resonate with Homeric sensibility.



Mystae Painter
 (Bocotia, c. 4th BC).
 Detail from *Odysseus aboard*
a pair of Amphorae being blown by
Boreas, c. 375 BC.
 Boeotian black-figure skyphos, H:15.
 Oxford, UK: Ashmolean Museum.

A Joycean Exegesis of *The Large Glass*

I.7

André Breton was determined that Duchamp's *Glass* is among the most significant works of the 20th century (Lebel 1959:94), while Joyce's *Ulysses* is considered to be the most famous literary work of the same period (Attridge 2004:3). The *Glass* (1912/1915-1923/1936) and *Ulysses* (1907/1914-1921/1922) are separate lifeworks over a relatively coinciding time span and as such are autobiographical of their authors. As Joyce likely identified with all three protagonists in *Ulysses* – Stephen, Bloom and Molly – Duchamp also probably saw himself in all the protagonists of the *Glass* – the Bachelors group, the Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity and the Bride.

It is unknown when one heard of the other for the first time, nor does it matter, but both Duchamp and Joyce, frequented the same social circles. In July 1915, within a month of Duchamp's arrival in the U.S., American painter and writer Walter Pach arranged to introduce him to John Quinn (1870-1924), a successful and powerful second-generation Irish-American corporate lawyer in New York. A lifelong bachelor, Quinn was an important patron of major figures of contemporary art. Prior to their meeting, Quinn had bought Duchamp's *The Chess Game* (1910) and *Apropos of Little Sister* (1911) at the Carroll Galleries, New York, in 1914, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 1* (1911) in 1915 and subsequently *Nude with Dark Skin* (1910). When Duchamp offered courses of French to Americans, as a newcomer's solution to learn English, his best client became Quinn, who would often take him out to dinner and the theatre after his lesson (Tomkins 1996:147). More importantly, Quinn was a patron of literary Modernism and a legal defender of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot and a friend of Ezra Pound. In that capacity, Quinn must have enjoyed discussing with Duchamp the value of these authors' work and the issues of censorship they employed him to face.



Left to right:
Ford Madox Ford,
James Joyce,
Ezra Pound and
John Quinn
at Pound's apartment,
70 bis, rue Notre Dame des Champs,
Paris VI, 1923. New York, NY:
The New York Public Library -
John Quinn Memorial Collection.

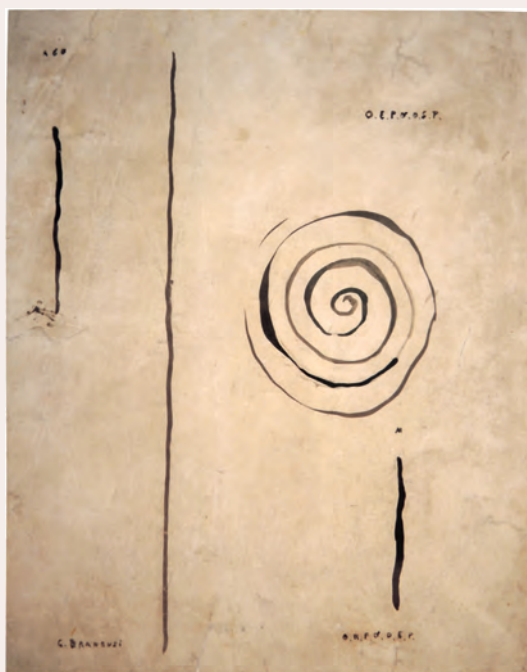
Duchamp and Joyce owed much of the comprehensive education that informs their work to the same library in Paris, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, although at different times. Joyce read every night in March 1903 Aristotle and Ben Jonson in this institution (Joyce 1966:38), a fact also recalled in *Ulysses* (Joyce 1934:2.26). Duchamp is known to have taken advantage to read a great number of specialised books during the time he worked there in the period from November 1913 through May 1914. Moreover, both international figures by the 1920s, they lived near one another in Paris and gathered in Montparnasse. They also had mutual friends – Constantin Brancusi and Man Ray, the two artists closest to Duchamp, who made celebrated portraits of Joyce.

Man Ray would have informed Duchamp about attending a reading by Joyce from his forthcoming novel *Ulysses* in Paris in December 1921 (Baum and Treillard 1995:46). On 17 March 1922, Joyce was sent by his publisher, Sylvia Beach, to Man Ray in his Rue Campagne studio, Paris, to have his press portrait made for wide distribution. Man Ray was also interested in Joyce because he had read short pieces by him in *The Little Review*, which had held his attention (Ray 1963:151). He posed in a tuxedo before a simple burlap curtain. Still recovering from a recent eye operation, he was wearing thick glasses. Man Ray recalled, "He seemed to consider the sitting a terrible nuisance. However, he was very patient, until after a couple of shots when he turned his head away from the lights, putting his hand over his eyes and saying that he could no longer face the glare. I snapped this pose, which has become the favourite one" (*ib.* 1963:151).



Man Ray
(USA, 1890-1976).
James Joyce, 17 March 1922, Paris.
Gelatin silver print, 25 x 20.
Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty
Museum.

Constantin Brancusi
(Romania, 1876-1957).
Symbole de James Joyce,
May 1929, Paris.
India ink on paper, 35 x 28.
Paris, FR: Musée National d'Art
Moderne, Centre Pompidou.



in the Irish author (Ellmann 1959:614). *Symbol of Joyce* appeared in the author's *Three Fragments from Work in Progress*, published by The Black Sun Press, Paris, in 1929. It was also used as the frontispiece in Richard Ellmann's biography of Joyce.

In 1928, Joyce went to meet Brancusi at his studio, 8 impasse Ronsin, Paris, with the mediation of his friend Pound, who considered him the best sculptor. In the spring of 1929, the American publishers of the Black Sun Press in Paris, Harry and Caresse Crosby, commissioned a set of illustrations from Brancusi for the frontispiece of Joyce's *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun*, extracts from *Finnegans Wake*. Brancusi produced some eight sketches in all, which were figurative, one of which eventually joined Duchamp's personal collection. Brancusi produced the *Symbol of James Joyce* in May 1929, when the publishers expressed disappointment that the drawings he had produced were not abstract. This symbolic portrait of Joyce includes a set of abstract linear notations applied by brush – three wavy verticals, a hypnotic spiral and block letters. Brancusi later said this design expresses the “sens du pousser” (feeling of thrusting) he found



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Cover of *Transition*,
Winter 1937.
Lithograph on paper, 22 x 16.
Antwerp, BE: Ronny van de Velde.

In May 1924, American publisher Robert McAlmon organised a dinner party for William Carlos Williams in *Les Trianons* restaurant (Hansen 1990:33). Williams sat opposite Joyce and amongst the guests were a number of old acquaintances such as Duchamp, Mina Loy and Man Ray (www.kunstgeografie.nl). Duchamp would also have the chance to meet Joyce often from the late 1920s with his close friend Mary Reynolds, who held an open house at 14 Rue Hallé almost nightly for her friends (Duchamp 1956:6).

In the summer of 1936, Duchamp was commissioned to create a cover for issue no. 26 of *Transition*, an American literary magazine and asked Sam Little of Los Angeles to photograph *Comb* (1916), then in the Arensberg collection, Hollywood, for that purpose so that the inscription along its edge could be read. On the cover featured the *Comb* upright at an angle with lines extended from its far edges so as to establish a spatial recession, wherein he placed the magazine's title, which was also laid out in such a way as to conform to the same perspective format. The resultant publication, which appeared in the winter of 1937, contained excerpts from Joyce's selected writings. According to Sylvia Beach, the magazine's editor, when on 15 December 1936 Joyce saw Duchamp's *Comb* on the cover, he told her jokingly, “the comb with thick teeth shown on this cover was the one used to comb out *Work in Progress*” (Beach 1959:72). He was referring to the grooming of texts that started to be written in 1923, were published in instalments since 1926 and whose final editing resulted in *Finnegans Wake* in 1939. Joyce's statement is perhaps best matched by one that Duchamp made at an interview with Dore Ashton in 1966 when talking about models of success. He said, “you

have to decide whether you'll be Pepsi-Cola, Chocolat Menier, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce... or James Joyce is maybe Pepsi-Cola. You can't name him without everybody knowing what you're talking about. [...] It is not desirable to be Pepsi-Cola. It is dangerous.” (Ashton 1966).

The extent to which Duchamp got to know Joyce is bound to remain a mystery, owing to scant information on the matter. However, the two men were actually close on an intellectual level and that matters most. Lawrence Steefel's paper reveals an interesting aspect concerning the Duchamp/Joyce relation, “Duchamp told me that he considered Roussel to be the French James Joyce, September, 1956” (Steefel 1977:287).

Duchamp told me that he considered Roussel to be the French James Joyce, September, 1956

With this statement Duchamp revealed that Roussel, who is reportedly responsible for his *Glass* and the one to show him the way (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:126), was equated to Joyce.

Duchamp read *Ulysses* and came under its influence rather obliquely, as arbitrary traces reveal. Discoursing on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "What is a ghost?" (Joyce 1934:9.186) asked Stephen, before attempting to answer. Then the narrator in the *Ithaca* episode spelled out the obvious – that "the guest" is Bloom and "the host" is Stephen (Joyce 1934:17.682-683). In a similar way, Marilyn Katz named Odysseus *xenos* (guest) and Penelope *xenodokos* (host) (Katz 1991:177). On the occasion of William Copley's personal exhibition at the Galerie Nina Dausset, Paris, in December 1953, Duchamp materialised his idea to distribute candy in a wrap that he designed. Across the diagonal of the square sheet of different coloured tinfoil, he printed in capitals "A GUEST + A HOST = A GHOST", followed by his name. Obviously, the guest/host relationship in this instance was Copley/Dausset, who, according to the amusing play of word, were conflated as ghost. In all likelihood, this equation was inspired to Duchamp by the respective words in *Ulysses*.



Interestingly, Ornella Volta, President of the Fondation Erik Satie, Paris, was the first and sole scholar to make an interdisciplinary comparison between Joyce's Molly/Penelope and Duchamp's Bride as contemporary paradigms of womanhood. She wrote, "Placed beside *Ulysses*, for example, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* could arguably illustrate a Molly/Penelope who – following, moreover, a tradition posterior to Homer, but nevertheless well established – has finally agreed to be stripped bare by her bachelor suitors." (Volta 2002:54).

Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
A GUEST + A HOST = A GHOST,
1953.
Text printed on candy wrappers.
Antwerp, BE: Ronny van de Velde.

Joyce openly chose Homer to contribute as successor to the whole literary tradition that comes out of him – Virgil, Dante, Milton and Shakespeare. Declaring the *Odyssey* to be the most beautiful, all-embracing and human theme in world literature, he said to his friend George Borach, "I am almost afraid to treat such a theme; it's overwhelming" (Borach 1979:69f). He appropriated Odysseus because he considered him to be the example par excellence of the "complete man" (Budgen 1972:17f), combining as much heroic as antiheroic traits. Essentially, his *Ulysses* is a paradigm of deconstruction, a process of *doing*, *redoing* and *undoing* the text actively through mastery, to show the text what it does not know (Taylor and Winquist 1998:350). This is evidenced in Joyce's *Ulysses* – *doing* the *Odyssey* in the life of middle-class citizens of Dublin; *redoing* the epic by fitting it in that single day of 16 June 1904; *undoing* the single epic to create three interwoven *Odysseys* of Bloom, Stephen and Molly. This too is evocative of Duchamp's *Glass* – *doing* Penelope and her suitors as the Bride stripped bare by her Bachelors; *redoing* the epic by capturing 3 dimensionality on diaphanous material that incorporates real space and time; *undoing* the original's iconolatry to create an iconoclastic variation. Though their masterworks had much in common, Joyce and Duchamp differed in regard to their openness – the former declared its relation to Homer proudly in his title (*Ulysses* is the Roman name by which Joyce knew Odysseus, as a fine Latinist), while the latter manifestly wished to be secretive about his source to the point that any association with Homer would seem like speculation.

The relation of the *Glass* to Homer's *Odyssey* serves as a springboard for the equally important relation of the *Glass* with Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is an extraordinary take on the *Odyssey* with likewise cryptic references to it. This latter comparison is perhaps more crucial, because Duchamp seems to treat his Bride and Bachelors quite like Joyce renders Molly and Leopold Bloom with reference to Penelope and Odysseus. It is the additional role of humour, irony and parody that makes all the difference. Joyce is the trickster par excellence, because he lampoons the original Homeric protagonists. So, he turns Odysseus to the 20th century's antihero Bloom – uncircumcised Jew, cuckolded, debased, decadent, impotent, lonesome... you name it! Joyce paints his portrait as a thoroughly whole man of real life, one whose enjoyment of sexual perversities – coprophilia, urolagnia, podophilia, masochism and transvestism – fully explored in the *Circe* and *Penelope* episodes, are balanced against his charitable deeds and altruism throughout the novel. The magnanimities of his personality turn him into a modern Lamb of God, who would take away the sin of the world and save Ireland. In this respect, Bloom is the ideal amalgam of man, like the Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity (see III.14), who is calling for attention yet is invisible on the *Glass*. In the *Cyclops* episode, when Bloom enters Barney Kiernan's pub, Joyce renders him like Christ, preaching "love [as] the opposite of hatred" (Joyce 1934:12.327) and this sequence foreshadows his role at the end of the scene as "ben Bloom Elijah" (*ib.* 1934:12.339), a kind of modern prophet that is yet to be appreciated by his people. In a similar vein, Duchamp said, "the artist acts like a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:138). Joyce also portrays Penelope as Molly, an ordinary middle-class wife, who is selfish, insatiable and filled with cunning and jealousy. She is like the Bride, tragic in her solitary world stuffed with the dream/fume of her apparatus/automobile for

the ideal Bachelor. Yet, in the *Sirens* episode, when Bloom hears Simon Dedalus singing a sentimental melody at the bar of the Ormond Hotel, he realises that his true love is not his pen pal lover Martha Clifford, but Molly and his pathos is increased by her incipient forsaking of him. Likewise, while Boylan is the aggressive and sexually indefatigable stud, it is the throwaway, sensitive and passive Bloom, who at last triumphs as a match. Despite his own failures as a husband and father, Bloom rather unexpectedly turns out in the end to be victorious, very much like Duchamp, alias Victor, in the history of art. So both Molly and Bloom fully accept themselves and one another as they are, with their faults and virtues, affirming life in all its imperfect glory. Duchamp subscribed to this same affirmation.

Ulysses has particular incidents that resemble features on the *Glass*. The 3s and 9s especially in the *Ithaca* episode are ultimately Christological references suggestive of the Trinity, which brings to mind the Bride as “apotheosis of virginity” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:39.1; 39.3). Though Joyce used religion as a metaphor to suggest the elevated possibilities that human nature can reach, it must be said that *Ulysses* is basically a comic novel, rather than a theological treatise. In similar ways, the *Glass*’ title “General notes. for a hilarious Picture.” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30) from the outset reveals that Duchamp intended to create a humorous parody of the Bride. In the *Ithaca* episode, the difference of Bloom’s actions with those of Odysseus is considerable. In the Homeric epic, Odysseus and Telemachus united in order to avenge the suitors who insisted on courting Penelope until she chose among them. However, the passive antihero Bloom treats Molly’s infidelity with the ‘suitor’ Boylan with acceptance and generosity. As a modern humanist, Bloom sees Molly’s extramarital affair as part of the natural pattern of the universe, a vast cosmic theme. What actually happened was due to woman’s instincts and her impulsiveness of many a bachelor, which is a matter causing pain, but will take care of itself. The true Homeric parallel of Penelope and suitors in *Ulysses* is the literary intelligentsia and Ireland. These suitors subscribed to Platonism, Theosophy and emotive Irish nationalism. A telling argument of one of the suitors, poet George Russell, was that “art has to reveal to us ideas” (*ib.* 1934:9.183), which are more important than the artist’s biography. To this Stephen answers, nine pages away, in support of biography that “we weave and unweave our bodies [...] from day to day, their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image.” (*ib.* 1934:9.192). Joyce subtly proposed modern subjectivity over past idealism. So, it is the Irish intellectuals possessing unidirectional and antiquated cultural influence that play the role of the *Glass*’ Bachelors. On the other hand, Bloom and Stephen differ from them by painting an ever-changing self-portrait on the loom of their life, which ultimately resembles the indeterminacy of Penelope/Bride. Molly’s soliloquy, in the *Penelope* episode, consisting of 24,196 words broken in 8 sentences, evokes the idea of infinite variety of womanhood, whose symbol is a horizontal 8. Recumbent as she is in this episode, Molly’s physical position suggests the horizontality of the Bride’s *Draft Pistons* in her *Cinematic Blossoming*. A current of melancholy runs through Molly’s personality. She describes her ever-unfulfilled vision “...I wish some man or other would take me sometime when hes [sic] there and kiss me in his arms...” (*ib.* 1934:18.725). This melancholy is echoed in Duchamp’s Bride who is designed to feel “ignorant desire. blank desire. (with a touch of malice)” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:39.3), presumably against all those who do not rise to the level of her expectation.

It is also interesting to cite the anagrams, motifs and ideas shared by Duchamp and Joyce – anagrams of Leopold Bloom “Ellpodbomool”, “Moldopeloom,” “Bollopedoom”, “Old Olebo” and “M. P.” are reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp’s “Mar cel du Champ”, “Marchand du Sel” and “Marchand de Cul” (Hahn 1964:23); motifs like bachelor, beggar, bicycle, blind, bottlewasher, bride, cemetery, chess, chessboard, cloud, comb, cuckoldry, cylinder, dream, gas, masturbation, milky way, mirror, peeping, penis, piston, puns, queen, sex, sneeze, sperm, stripping, tissues, transvestism, urinary, virgin, yes and waterfall; names like Dulcinea and Entr’acte; ideas like “Musemathematics” (Joyce 1934:11.274) and “concealed ocular witness” for Bloom’s cuckoldry (*ib.* 1934:17.718).

Even if the above comparable cases are coincidental, their obvious similarity points to the fact that both *Glass* and *Ulysses* touch upon universally shared archetypal matters, as instanced in Homer. This explains why artists who came under the spell of the Duchampian mode of thought created works inspired either from Homer’s *Odyssey* or Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Jean Tinguely’s major work *The Cyclops: The Monster in the Forest* of 1969-1994 served as a homage to significant artists no longer alive at the time of its construction – Marcel Duchamp, Yves Klein, Louise Nevelson and Kurt Schwitters. Moreover, Richard Hamilton – an avid follower of Duchamp after first seeing his work in the 1952 exhibition “Twentieth Century Masterpieces” at the Tate Gallery, London – had himself been preoccupied with imaging *Ulysses* for nearly half a century, from 1947 to 1998 (see pp 69, 158, 175, 191). He was first inspired by the idea of illustrating Joyce’s experimental novel while doing his army service at the age of 25, likely soon after reading it. Consistent with the task he set himself to, in 1981 he decided to create one illustration for each of the novel’s eighteen chapters and a nineteenth image destined as a frontispiece.

Joyce’s *Ulysses* is a literary work of Postmodernism (see I.6) because it mimics various literary genres and so appears deconstructed. Characteristic of deconstruction is the scene at the pub in the *Cyclops* episode,

where suddenly the main narrative is intersected by an invitation to a wedding, where all the guests have floral names of flowers, plants and trees (*ib.* 1934:12.321-322). Such devices entertained the author and there lies the essence of Dada. The *Wandering Rocks* episode (*ib.* 1934:10.216-251), corresponding to the Homeric myth's optical illusion, is filled with tricks and deliberately misleading language. One of the most complex episodes is *The Oxen of the Sun* (*ib.* 1934:14.377-421). It is concerned with the birth of Mina Purefoy's son at the National Maternity Hospital in Dublin, which elicits only a jocular response from drinking young men, including Stephen. The episode's true protagonist is the birth of the English language, a matter of major concern to Joyce. The nine months of gestation under the supervision of Dr Horne, a Homeric parallel of sun god Helios, are loosely marked by the so-called nine 'periods' of the English language. Joyce's brilliant use of the various forms of English include the Old English tone of Beowulf, the 15th century medieval morality play *Everyman*, language imitative of John Bunyan, Charles Lamb's essays, Dickensian sentimentality, the 19th century Gothic novel and the modern slang that predicted the breakdown of Western culture and its language. The *Eumeus* episode (*ib.* 1934:16.597-649) is filled with lengthy, unfinished sentences, creating an atmosphere of vast attenuation, artifice and especially a feeling of tiredness. The *Ithaca* episode (*ib.* 1934:17.650-722) is written in a technical, denotative language in the questionnaire style, with question-and-answer format. Its scientised language, fulfils this chapter's objective catechetical nature. Finally, Joyce's technique in the *Penelope* episode (*ib.* 1934:18.723-768) is illustrated by stream-of-consciousness narrative.

Hamilton evoked the novel's postmodern quality in his illustration for *The Oxen of the Sun* episode. He embraced the concept of including a developing flow of styles from earliest to modern (Hamilton 1982:109). The print entitled *In Horne's House* illustrates Joyce's gathering of medical students around a spread of sardines and beer. He represented a group of male figures around a circular table, bearing a still life in the style of Analytic Cubism. In the background, a cloaked Madonna-like figure appears behind an open door, suggesting a nurse. In the foreground, a figure fiddling with a cup is wearing an Easter Island mask. His gaze leads the viewer's eye towards a seated figure shown in profile with an ancient Egyptian physiognomy taking a futuristic sip of drink. To his right and dominating the scene is Stephen standing as the romantic figure of the painter Baron Gros (1771-1835), his upward pointing finger recalling an *epiphany*, a moment of divine revelation and insight. Opposite him, Bloom is seated at the table, as the painter Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), pouring drink from the bottle. Behind him rises another drinker as a youthful self-portrait by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1969). All different styles blend thoroughly into a harmonious whole.



Richard Hamilton
(England, 1922-2011).
In Horne's House, 1981-1982.
Etching, engraving and aquatint on
paper, 53 x 43.
London, UK: Tate Gallery.

The affinity of Duchamp and Joyce may further be inferred by their posthumous appearance along with French avant-garde composer Erik Satie (1866-1925). Wisdom as their common denominator is the prime subject in Nick Cudworth's *Three Wise Men* of 1980, which represents Duchamp, Satie and Joyce in the attitude of the three wise monkeys, who embody the Buddhist proverbial principle "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil," by which one may supposedly be spared hell. In this instance, the monkeys are Duchamp covering his eyes, Satie covering his ears and Joyce covering his mouth, thus supposedly avoiding evil. But do they actually avoid so? In the Western world, both the proverb and the image are often used to refer to a lack of moral responsibility on the part of people who refuse to acknowledge impropriety, looking the other way or feigning ignorance. Here, the three wise men are rather evoked as revealing essences in their fields – Duchamp as the iconoclast who offers an alternative to retinal art, Satie as the gymnopedist who introduces musical austerity stripping music from pretentiousness and sentimentality Joyce as the avant-garde author noted for his experimental use of

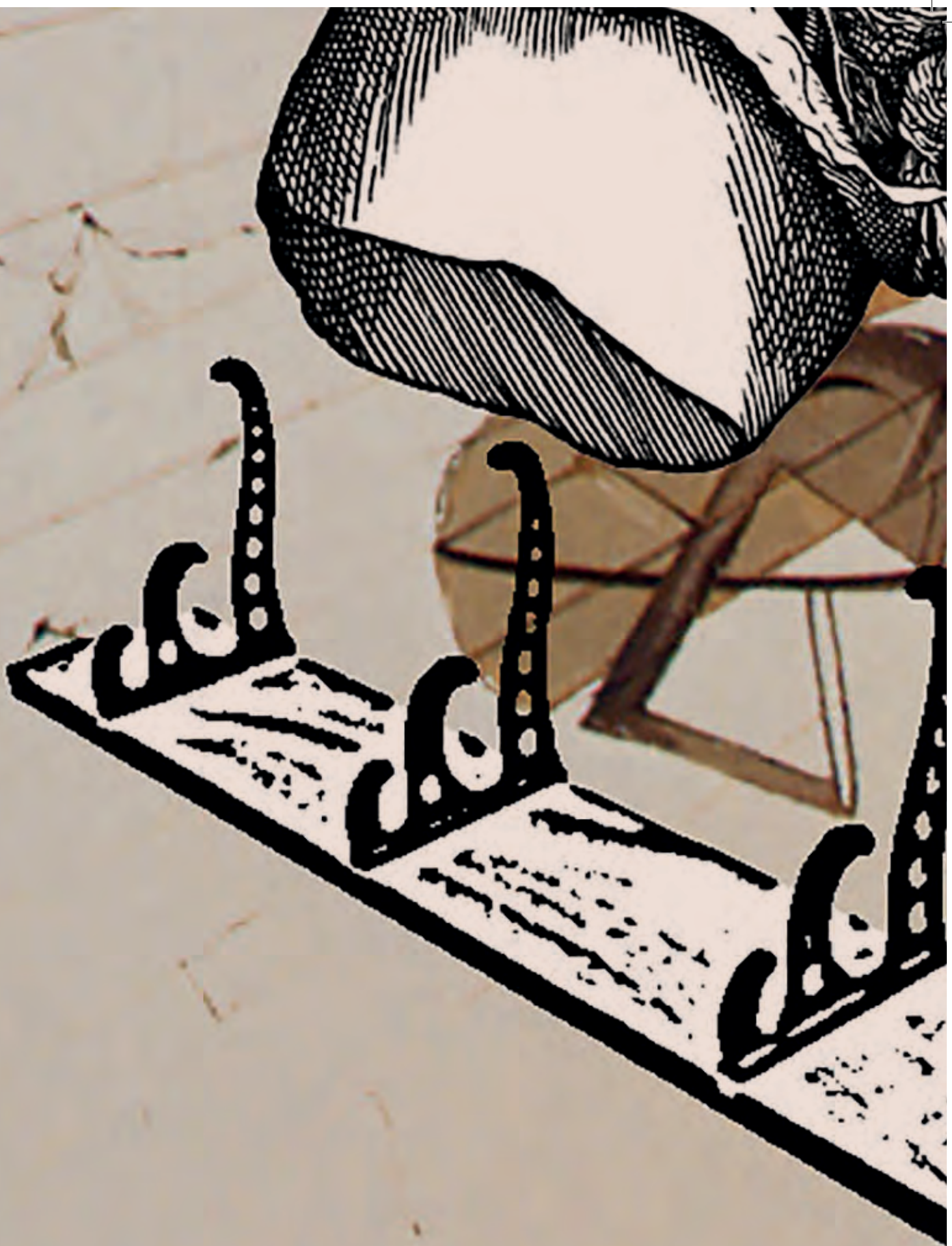


Nick Cudworth (England, b. 1947).
*Three Wise Men: Duchamp, Satie
and Joyce*, 1980. Crayon and pastel
on paper, 70 x 122. London, UK:
Private Collection.

language and exploration of new literary methods. This brings to mind Picabia's advice to the public going to *Relâche's* premiere at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, on 4 December 1924, to bring dark glasses and ear plugs and shout against Satie and himself (Tomkins 1996:264). On another instance, John Cage's *An Alphabet* (1981-1982) brought together 15 unlikely characters – including himself as narrator, Marcel Duchamp (enacted by David Vaughan), Erik Satie (enacted by Merce Cunningham) and James Joyce (enacted by Mikel Rouse) – whose simultaneous recitation (including literal quotations, freely adapted historical material and lines the composer simply made up) evoked the Babel effect. The musical score, conceived but never fully completed by Cage, used sound effects that make no literal sense with respect to the polylogue.

Significantly, William Anastasi recapitulated his *James Joyce and Marcel Duchamp* essay with reference to both authors' mutual interest in eros (Anastasi 2003:5). With the *Glass* Duchamp showed evil, coming open, albeit allegorically, about sex in human relationships as an endlessly frustrating process. Similarly, with *Ulysses* Joyce spoke evil, revealing what Molly really thought when her subconscious gates were flung open on that very night of 1904. Such secrets' impious disclosing evokes the myth in which Tiresias was drawn into an argument between Zeus and his wife Hera, on the theme of who has more pleasure in sex – the woman as per the former's claim, or the man as per the latter's claim, since he had allegedly experienced both. Tiresias replied "Of ten parts a man enjoys one only; But a woman enjoys the full ten parts in her heart." (Apollodorus 1921:III.vi.8). Hera instantly struck him blind for his impiety to disclose divine secrets. In recompense Zeus gave Tiresias the gift of foresight and a lifespan of seven lives. The fact that Duchamp chose to remain underground until the time came to gain deserved prominence, even more so posthumously, while Joyce's eyesight was increasingly deteriorating throughout his life may be proof that the Olympian gods are still alive







**Homeric Traces
in the Postmodern Works of
Duchamp**

II

II.1

Homer's relation to *The Blind Man*



Rembrandt van Rijn (Dutch Republic, 1606-1669). *Homer*, 1663. Oil on canvas, 107 x 82. The Hague, NL: Mauritshuis. | Anonymous (France, c. 20th). *James Joyce with an Eyepatch after an Operation*, 1922, France. Philadelphia, PA: Rosenbach Museum and Library.

The cultural archetype of the blind bard tradition in Western literature took roots originally with Homer and subsequently with Dante, Milton and eventually Joyce. The narrator of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, apparently subsuming the persona of Homer, refers to himself as a blind man from Chios (Burgess 2015:71). Though even his existence is questioned, the fact is that Homer has widely been perceived as a blind man. Rembrandt, the painter par excellence of *tenebrism* (dramatic illumination), famously represented him against a dark mist lit obliquely from above. He painted a pitch-black colour in the position of Homer's eyes suggestive of his utter blindness.

Extending from Homer, with whom the blind bard has become synonymous, the literary tradition of the sightless author that has been accorded the gift of incorporeal sight includes the illustrious cases of Dante, who in *Paradise's* Canto XXVI is pleased to lose his ability to see when he looks into the brilliantly luminous presence of St John the Evangelist and then regains it in purified form (Dante 1914:XXVI.1-69), John Milton, who turned blind in mid-life and subsequently used his own biography to develop the theme of blindness in his literary work (see Milton's 1655 sonnet "On His Blindness") and Joyce, who suffered throughout his life from defective eye-sight that eventually led to nine operations resulting in increasing levels of blindness that no ophthalmologist could cure (Ellmann 1959:574). Of course, the blindness of all the aforementioned exceptional individuals proved to be their great illumination. The apparent conception of Joyce as a visually impaired man clearly falls in the conventional tradition of blind bards. As Adaline Glasheen claimed, "it probably mattered to Joyce that Homer was blind" (Glasheen 1977:129). The extent to which Joyce was preoccupied with the striking analogy is difficult to retrace, although, in 1922, he had to be reassured by his ophthalmologist, Dr Louis Borsch, that there was no imminent danger of glaucoma *foudroyant*, the disease that was probably the cause of Homer's blindness (Ellmann 1959:537). In any case, for Joyce, the theme of blindness relates to metaphysical notions of prophecy and epiphany that lie at the heart of his 1922 novel *Ulysses*.

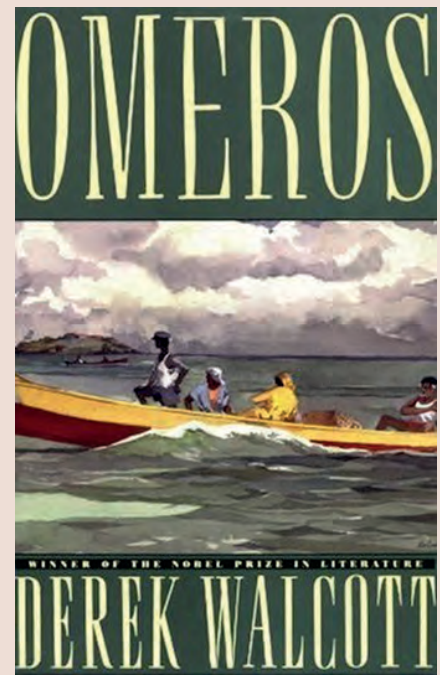
Until recently Homer was preserved as a paradigm of a blind seer. In Nobel prize-winning Caribbean poet and painter Derek Walcott's postmodern epic poem *Omeros* of 1990, he was reincarnated in all sorts of guises – as the blind Greek poet himself, the blind popular poet Seven Seas, the African rhapsodist, the famous American painter Winslow Homer inspired by the Atlantic Ocean, the Roman counterpart Virgil and a blind barge-man who turns up on the stairs of the London church St Martin in the Fields with a manuscript refused by editors. Homer's standard attribute of blindness was never a condition to be mourned. On the contrary, it became a counterweight to his undoubted gift of inner vision, poetic mastery

and extraordinary memory. The inability of a spiritually gifted person to see the light became synonymous with enlightenment. This explains why the owl, which preys on its quarry during the darkness of the night, became the emblematic bird of Athena, goddess of wisdom. Especially in the romantic ideology of poetic vision, the topics of blindness and second sight became closely linked. As Patricia Novillo-Corvalán put it, “what the unseeing, inert eyes of the poet cannot perceive is compensated for by the vast, unlimited vision afforded by the eye of the imagination, as the poet exchanges eyesight for the craft of versifying” (Novillo-Corvalán 2007:161). Therefore, Homer was immortalised as the paradigm of the incorporeal seer, uniquely suited to author dreams, tales and myths.

Visual artists of the romantic school were especially attracted to the gift of Homer’s blindness. Well aware of the fact that in the Ionic dialect the verbal form *homēreúō* (*ὁμηρεύω*) has the specialised meaning of guiding the blind (Liddell and Scott 1968 ad loc.), they ascribed great privilege to Homer’s guide and instituted this theme. Edward-Sheffield Bartholomew’s relief *Blind Homer Led by the Genius of Poetry* of 1851 bears a compositional resemblance to Greek grave stelae. The figure of Homer owes a debt to Hellenistic relief portrayals of elderly figures. Homer’s head resembles ancient antecedents that portray the poet with curling hair restrained by a fillet, a full beard, sunken cheeks and vacant, unincised eyes suggesting his blindness. The figure of the Genius of Poetry is entirely without precedent and is probably based on a live model, whose gender is intentionally vague. The sculpture’s subject matter has plausible autobiographical resonances in its linking of artistic talent and physical affliction. Lame from smallpox, Bartholomew may have been insinuating that on the dawn of his tenure in Rome he could overcome his handicap and achieve artistic renown, like Homer, who had achieved greatness in spite of his blindness. This work was a watershed in Bartholomew’s all-too-brief career, for he died in 1858 at age 36.

With his painting *Homer and his Guide* of 1874, William-Adolphe Bouguereau gave visual expression to André Chenier’s poem describing shepherds offering their service after hearing the respected poet Homer praying for a guide. The excitement of the distant boys about the loss of control over their dogs contrasts with the noble solemnity of Homer, who is aware of the background drama yet remains composed. Likewise, the charging dog of the foreground is directing its aggression not to the guided person, but the youthful guide’s cautious treading armed proactively with a stone. These compositional devices aim to accentuate the importance of Homer, who appears utterly upright in the centre like a revered statue.

Lovis Corinth’s painting *Homer* of 1914 was part of the wall decoration, illustrating episodes and individual figures from Homer and Ariosto, for the villa of the industrialist Ludwig Katzenellenbogen, in Freienhagen,



Derek Walcott
(West Indies, 1930-2017).
Cover of *Omeros*. New York, NY:
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.



Edward-Sheffield Bartholomew (USA, 1822-1858). *Blind Homer Led by the Genius of Poetry*, 1851. Marble, 76 x 52. New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art. | William-Adolphe Bouguereau (France, 1825-1905). *Homer and his Guide*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 209 x 143. Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum.

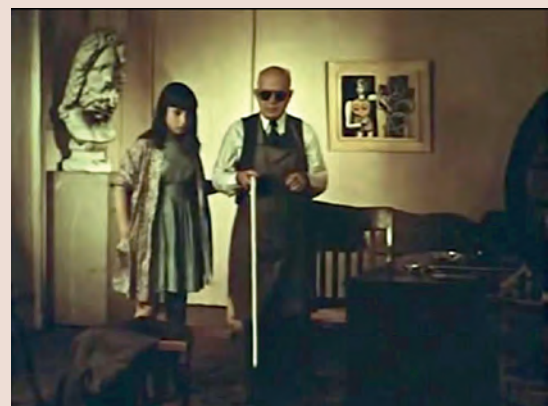
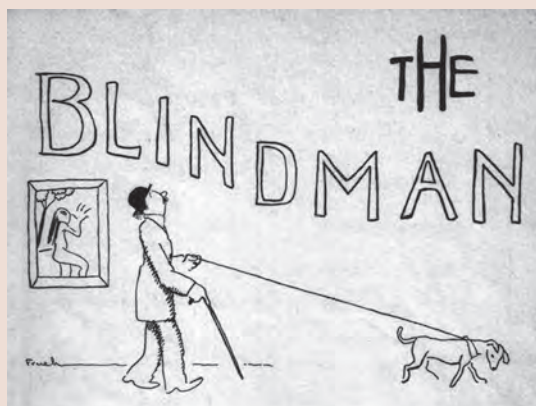


Lovis Corinth
(East Prussia,
1858-1925).
Homer, 1914.
Tempera on
canvas, 227 x 54.
Berlin, DE:
Berlinsche
Galerie.

near Berlin. Its subject is introduced by a top caption inscribed with the name of Homer in block Greek letters. Underneath it, the poet appears frontally, eyes securely shut, preceded by a scantily clad young boy, who serves as a guide, offering his shoulder to lead Homer by his right hand. The poet's left hand, while holding a lyre, is touching the shoulder's other end, thus gaining a sense of his frontal orientation. The picture's great challenge is the vertical narrow format, no doubt responding to a confined separate area in the villa. It masterfully portrays a foreshortened version of a subject best represented from the side. Thus the foreground person prefigures the one behind, while the background echoes the poet's towering silhouette – all this system of superposition aiming to emphasise the celebrated subject.

The subject of Homer with a guide seems to relate to *The Blind Man*, an ephemeral yet notable Dada journal jointly produced by Duchamp, Beatrice Wood and Henri-Pierre Roché. Its first issue was published on 10 April 1917, one day after the opening of the first exhibition of the newly founded Society of Independent Artists, to announce it. The second and last issue in May came out to denounce it, as the Society's jurors infamously refused Mr Richard Mutt's *Fountain*. In the first issue Roché presented *The Blind Man* as providing the missing yet essential "link between the pictures and the public" (*The Blind Man* 1917:4) and wrote, "In Paris the Blind Man has seen people go to exhibitions of advanced art (even cubist or futurist) with the intention of getting indignant about it and who spend a couple of hours giving vent to their indignation. But on reaching home they realised that they did not like their old favourite paintings any more. That was the first step of their conversion. A year later he discovered in their home the very pictures which had so annoyed them." (*The Blind Man* 1917:5). From the above excerpt, it is clear that the Blind Man stands out from the crowd and has the ability to see art with his mind rather than his physical eyes. *The Blind Man* then is a critique of vision, referring to works that stage a significant challenge to the precepts and prerogatives of the traditional visual system. Explaining the reason for going to the 1917 exhibition on behalf of the public, Wood wrote: "Frankly I come to the Independents to be amused. I am hoping to see many portraits of beautiful young girls with sunlight on the left and also many gorgeous pictures of tripled head ladies moving in and thro' purple buildings. I expect to see wheels and one-eyed monstrosities." (*The Blind Man* 1917:6). This statement provides further evidence that educated people, like Wood, expected to view contemporary art inspired by Homeric subjects, such as nymphs, the three-headed Cerberus and the one-eyed Cyclopes.

The illustration for the cover of *The Blind Man's* first issue was created by American caricaturist Alfred J. Frueh, who had formerly received art instruction in Paris from important French painters, including Henri Matisse. It depicts a blind gentleman in a suit with walking stick, led by a seeing dog that sniffs its way. His shut eyes are indicated by a line, while the rim of his bowler hat accentuates his upward gaze expressing his disinterest in the physical field. At the same time, however, he seems to be aware yet indifferent to the thumbing nose gesture of the seeing figure in the picture he has just passed. This journal's title of the joint word "Blindman" in block letters begs the reader to wonder who this Blind Man is. Considering the aforementioned romantic obsession with the subject of Homer with a guide, it seems that Frueh's illustration follows this tradition. The blind gentleman led by a guide dog appears to be a modern anachronism and parody of Homer led by Genius. Hans Richter's 1947 film, *Dreams that Money can Buy*, to which Duchamp contributed a scenario, features a blind grandpa led by his granddaughter into the office of Joe who sells dreams, amidst the classic bust of Zeus of Otricoli (the original is in the Vatican Museums) and Fernand Léger's painting *The Big Julie* of 1945 (Museum of Modern Art, NY). Despite his impaired sight this blind man is quick to recover Joe, who was locked up by a gangster in a closet, as well as sell him one of his many dreams. The reference to Homer as supreme maker of tales is clear.



Alfred J. Frueh (USA, 1880-1968). Illustration from the cover of *The Blind Man*, No. 1, 10 Apr. 1917, New York. Print on paper, 16 x 21. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | **Hans Richter** (Germany, 1888-1976). Still from *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, 1947. Film, 01:39:00. New York, NY: Films International of America.

What is more, it could also be that the journal's Blind Man refers to the archetype of the conceptual man that is visually sound, but is being initiated to physical blindness, so that he may perceive the world with the mind's eye. In this strand of thought, Joyce has Stephen Dedalus, a surrogate of Homer, tread with eyes shut and tapping with a walking stick on Sandymount Strand. Referring to the blindness that activates this other vision of the mind Stephen thinks, "Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. [...] Shut your eyes and see. [He felt] nicely in the dark, [utter freedom for once, like] walking into eternity" (Joyce 1934:3.38). Once initiated, he considered the walking stick redundant and threw it away. He saw that he could see...



Joseph Strick (USA, 1923-2010). Still from *Ulysses*, 1967. Film, 01:12:00. London, UK: British Lion Films.

Besides the incorporeal sight of gifted individuals, Frueh's illustration is also about those with operational eyes. The first most immediate interpretation is the inability of the uninitiated public to understand the works and to know how to see them. This meaning seems supported by the disrespectful naked figure in an arguably Matissean style who is doing a *piéd de nez* (snook) with the thumb touching its nose tip. It seems to identify with the general public that looks down on the conceptual aspect of art. But it is possible to assume an altogether different interpretative hypothesis for the whole scene, one that evokes Odysseus mocking another type of blind man, the Cyclops Polyphemus, who was so barbarous, savage and uncivilised as to deserve losing his one eye. When the blinded Polyphemus offers Odysseus *xeniā* (guest-gifts), as a means to trick and catch him, the latter responded: "I only wish it were certain I could make you reft of spirit / and life and send you to the house of Hades, as it is certain / that not even the Shaker of the Earth will ever heal your eye for you." (Lattimore 1965:9.523-525). This response, which vulgarly translates as "kiss my arse!", further resembles a scene in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Getting angry with Bloom's sermon about love, the ferocious one-eyed citizen, fully blinded by the sun in his eye, missed the former upon launching a biscuit box against him, "And the last we saw was the bloody car rounding the corner and old sheepsface on it gesticulating" (Joyce 1934:12.337). Likewise, such a mockery of the status quo is central in the artistic intention of Duchamp.



Alfred J. Frueh (USA, 1880-1968). Detail from the cover of "*The Blind Man No. 1*", 10 Apr. 1917, New York. Print on paper, 16 x 21. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | Joseph Strick (USA, 1923-2010). *Ulysses*, 1967. Film drama, 01:12:00. London, UK: British Lion Films.

II.2

Duchamp as *Odysseus*

Of course, it goes without saying that life develops in unforeseen ways. Exceptional personalities, like Duchamp, visited places of their interest during their long life. His life, spanning 81 years, was rife with travelling experience. He was born on 18 July 1887 in Blainville-Crevon Seine-Maritime in the Haute-Normandie region of France. Throughout his life he was widely travelled as a genuine citizen of the world. In his youth he travelled within Europe – Austria, Germany, England and Hungary. On 6 June 1915 he boarded the S.S. Rochambeau for New York and lived in Manhattan until 1918. When the United States entered the First World War, he took refuge in Argentina and lived in Buenos Aires from 1918 to 1919. In the summer of the same year he returned to Paris and in 1920 went back to New York. In 1923 he settled in Paris, where he remained until 1940, except for occasional trips around Europe and visits to New York. In 1940-1942 he lived in Arcachon, Grenoble and Sanary to escape the occupied zone. In 1942 he returned to New York and remained there for the rest of his life, apart from regular trips abroad. In 1954 he married Alexina ‘Teeny’ Sattler and in 1955 became a naturalised United States citizen. In 1958 he started the tradition of spending one to two months every spring or summer in Cadaques, Spain. In September 1960, Teeny and Marcel went out of their way to visit Greece (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 1/9/1960). In 1964 he began living half of the year (spring and summer) at 5 Rue Parmentier, Neilly-sur-Seine. The other half of the year (autumn and winter) he spent in New York. Late in his life, he made round trips to England, Holland, Italy, Mexico, Monte Carlo, Spain, as well as within France and the United States. After an evening dining at home in Neuilly-sur-Seine, with his friends Man Ray and Robert Lebel, Duchamp retired and died of heart failure in his studio in the early morning of 2 October 1968. He was buried in the Duchamp family tomb in the Cimetière Monumental in Rouen. It is no peculiarity that as *émigré* artist he travelled back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean. However, despite his lifelong extensive wanderings, towards the end of his life Duchamp was attracted to his native France, which increased the chance he would pass away there. Though the life of Odysseus would have ended as Tiresias had predicted, “Death will come to you from the sea, in / some altogether unwarlike way and it will end you / in the ebbing time of a sleek old age.” (Lattimore 1965:11.134-135), fate had it that the end of Duchamp’s life followed the Odyssean pattern of having returned to his native country.

Odysseus’ name is related to the Greek verb *odyssoimai*, which means to be angry at, to hate, or to be grieved. Thus, Odysseus stands for the odious one who causes pain or makes others angry. Hence, when his grandfather Autolycus proposed to call him Odysseus, he associated that name with his own tricky nature (Lattimore 1965:19.396), “since I have come to this place distasteful to many, women / and men alike on the prospering earth, so let him be given / the name Odysseus, that is distasteful” (*ib.* 1965:19.407-409). Likewise, while admiring him, Breton called Duchamp “most irritating” (quoted in Cabanne 1971:16). He had unintentionally annoyed the establishment of his time. The first time was with the Puteaux group, whose leaders, Gleizes and Metzinger and even his own brothers, Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, excluded his submission of *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* from the *Salon des Indépendants*, Paris, in 1912. The second time was with George Bellows, representative of the American realist painters, who vehemently opposed exhibiting *Fountain* in the Society of Independent Artists’ first exhibition at the Grand Central Palace, New York, in 1917. Though both cases victimised Duchamp, they contributed to perpetually establish his reputation as a true pioneer. It was such a turn of fate that likely prompted Henri-Pierre Roché to title his unfinished novel about Duchamp *Victor* (1957-1959). In addition, the theme of Odysseus’ name is immensely complicated by the meanings of the pseudonym that he used to trick the Cyclops. That false name was *ou tis* (Lattimore 1965:9.366), which means no man. However, when the time came for the Cyclops to reveal his aggressor, his fellow Cyclopes perceived of *ou tis* as *me tis* (*ib.* 1965:9.410), which on the one hand means any man and on the other hand puns with *metis*, the word for artifice, craftiness or trickery. This is the first recorded pun in world literature and would not have gone unnoticed by Duchamp, who was a notorious punster. What is more, the actual nobody in the *Odyssey* happened to be Elpenor, who suffered an accidental death of his drunkenness, thus missing the chance of having his name and fame celebrated by poets and future generations. This death significantly foreshadowed the wasted loss of Odysseus’ remaining companions as a result of “their own wild recklessness” (*ib.* 1965:1.7). Of course, a hero like Odysseus would be far from being nobody, as every one of his deeds, perhaps unwillingly during his life, rendered his name glorious for the future. This quality applies to Duchamp, whose name and fame demonstrably grows with time.

When a theatrical production of Stephen Phillips’ play *Ulysses* was staged at Her Majesty’s Theatre, London, on 8 February 1902, its manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree commissioned Charles A. Buchel to illustrate the souvenir booklet on it. Buchel’s illustration featured Odysseus on the prow of his trireme with his crew, himself silhouetted against the sun, while the meander border included cartouches in ancient Greek of all the adjectives compounded from the prefix *poly* (much), with which Homer famously defined him – *polymetis* (exceedingly cunning), *polytlas* (much-enduring), *polymechanos* (full of devices), *polyplagtos*

(much-travelled) and *polytropos* (capable of many turns). All of these resourceful traits could be applied to the exceptional polyqualified personality of Duchamp. Odysseus' capacity for adapting to a mutable world in nondogmatic ways makes him humanity's first sceptic, provisional in his outlook and interested in the probable rather than the necessary (Zerba 2012:85). Duchamp followed closely in Odysseus' tread. Joyce too described his protagonist likewise, "He's a cultured allroundman, Bloom is [...] There's a touch of the artist about old Bloom." (*ib.* 1934:10.231-232).

Yet, apart from all the above superior qualities linked with Odysseus, it is interesting that Homer offers a clashing description of his external look. First, Menelaos clearly describes him as "a bold and strong man" (Lattimore 1965:4.333). Many books later, Odysseus recounts to Alcinoos at the Phaeacean court what Polyphemus said of him, after learning who it was that caused his blinding, "Ah now, a prophecy spoken of old is come to completion. / There used to be a man here, great and strong and a prophet, / Telemos, Eurymos' son, who for prophecy was pre-eminent and grew old as a prophet among the Cyclopes. This man told me / how all this that has happened now must someday be accomplished, / and how I must lose the sight of my eye at the hands of Odysseus. / But always I was on the lookout for a man handsome / and tall, with great endowment of strength on him, to come here; / but now the end of it is that a little man, nattering, feeble, / has taken away the sight of my eye." (*ib.* 1965:9.507-516). In essence, through the eyes of Polyphemus, Homer here portrays Odysseus as an antihero. This brings to mind Bloom, the other protagonist in Joyce's *Ulysses*, who is derogatorily portrayed as Jewish, impotent, decadent, lonesome and cuckolded. Yet in both cases runs a similar vein of the antihero employing his wit to rise above his vicissitudes. In any case, Polyphemus' dismissive description of Odysseus does not necessarily clash with Menelaos' recollection. As a matter of fact, the discrepancy of opinion between Menelaos and Polyphemus, puts judgement in perspective. The admittedly brutish king of Sparta, compares Odysseus in terms of his fellow humans, whereas Polyphemus judges him from the viewpoint of a huge and fierce Cyclop.

What is more significant, however, in the victory of Odysseus over Polyphemus is what each stands for. The fact that Polyphemus depreciates Odysseus' external appearance serves ideally the purpose of accentuating his mental capacity. Homer eloquently makes here the point that wit triumphs over strength. Although Greek mythology privileged him to be the giant son of Poseidon and despite his name means "abounding in songs and legends" (Liddell and Scott 1968 ad loc.), Polyphemus paid dearly for his arrogance and was outwitted by the "Nobody" (Lattimore 1965:9.366) Odysseus. The most artful Greek, Odysseus, used as a pseudonym the word *ou tis* (no man) and with that exchange of names defeated the great Polyphemus. It was by lying that Odysseus blinded Polyphemus. Lying and blinding are inseparable, because when one misleads somebody, the misled person is blind to that thing. This is the greatness of Homer's tale, that he grabs a complex matter in such a simple way. The famous Odyssean wit directly resonates with Duchamp's contribution in art, his capacity to think of and create cerebral art, which through time has proven to be superior to retinal art. This brings to mind what Duchamp said to Sweeney in 1946 about Courbet, that he "had introduced the physical emphasis in the 19th century. I was interested in ideas – not merely in visual products. I wanted to put painting once more at the service of the mind." (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:125). It is this triumph of conceptual over conventional art that is emblematised in the myth of Polyphemus' blinding. The same subject was approached variously throughout time – symbolically as the victory of culture over barbarity by Aristonothos in c. 680 BC, surrealistically as self-infliction by Albert Samain in 1905 and conceptually as a golden shower resulting from the attack on the physical eye by Gergö Gilicze in 2013. The hidden meaning of the ancient myth is very close to the artistic pitfalls of visual paradox, double meaning images and optical illusion – all of them are some kind of attack upon the eye, an Odyssean gesture in a symbolic way. The gouging out of the eye, or deception to the eye, relates to the art historical expression of *trompe-l'œil*, referring to those images in which illusion guides the gaze. This concerns especially Duchamp's *Tu m' (You [blank] Me)* of 1918 (see p. 27).. However, all of Duchamp's works use such an artifice, which liberates artistic expression. So, it makes sense in this respect to identify Duchamp with Odysseus and Courbet to Polyphemus.



Charles A. Buchel
(Germany, 1872-1950).
Ulysses, 1902.
Illustration in the souvenir
booklet of Stephen Phillips'
play at Her Majesty's
Theatre, London.



Auguste Rodin (France, 1840-1917).
Odysseus, naked and bearded man,
looking to the left, with bent knees,
c. 1898. Graphite and watercolour
on paper, 50 x 33. Paris,
FR: Musée Rodin.

Richard Avedon
(USA, 1923-2004).
Marcel Duchamp, Artist,
31 January 1958, New York.
Silver print on paper, 42 x 40.
Courtesy of The Richard Avedon
Foundation, New York, NY.



Another Odyssean trait, which may prove to be of relevance to Duchamp, concerns the unusual subject of male crying that has long been considered a taboo. It strikes the reader of the *Odyssey* to find its protagonist on every occasion did not conceal his suffering and openly expressed his feelings, managing to arouse the sympathy of his spectators or audience. Homer took care to excuse the crying of men in general. Above them all, however, the *Odyssey* is replete with instances in which Odysseus cries. He cried first at Ogygia, Calypso's island, out of nostalgia for his home, "he was sitting out on the beach, crying, as before now / he had done, breaking his heart in tears, lamentations and sorrow, as weeping tears he looked out over the barren water." (Lattimore 1965:5.82-84); "he would sit

upon the rocks, at the seaside, / breaking his heart in tears and lamentation and sorrow" (*ib.* 1965:5.156-157). Speaking to the queen of Phaeacians Arete, he admitted, throughout seven years with Calypso, "drenching with tears [his] clothing" (*ib.* 1965:7.259). Then, in the land of the dead, Odysseus "broke into tears" with pity first at the sight of the soul of his companion Elpenor and later of his mother Anticlea (*ib.* 1965:11.55, 87). The same happened at the sight of Agamemnon's soul (*ib.* 1965:11.395), together with whom he shed "big tears" (*ib.* 1965:11.466). When on Ithaca he revealed himself to Telemachus, "So he spoke and kissed his son and the tears running / down his cheeks splashed on the ground." (*ib.* 1965:16.190-191). Another time, when Argos, his patient and loyal dog, recognised him he "secretly [from Eumaeus] wiped a tear away" (*ib.* 1965:17.305). Interviewed by Penelope, Odysseus as beggar admitted that his mourning risked being doubted; one "might find fault with me and say I swam in tears because my brain drowned in liquor" (*ib.* 1965:19.121-122). Experiencing his wife mourn Odysseus, "He hid his tears and deceived her." (*ib.* 1965:19.212). Finally, after slaying all the suitors in his palace, "sweet longing for lamentation / and tears took hold of him." (*ib.* 1965:22.500-501). In the large series of watercolour drawings dedicated to the *Odyssey* that Rodin created in the late 1890s, one shows Odysseus as a weary man, head down, knees bent, with two long black tears squirting from his eyes. This is evocative of his condition in the *Odyssey*, a fallen hero who suffers his fate; sees his companions disappear, his boats sink; is alone before a future he fears; and may have lost the love of Penelope.



Aristonothos (Greece, c. 7th BC). *Odysseus blinding Polyphemus*, c. 680 BC. Red-figure krater, H:36. Rome, IT: Palazzo dei Conservatori Museum - Musei Capitolini. | Démétrius Galanis (Greece, 1879-1966). *Albert Samain, "Polyphème": The Blinding of Polyphemus*, 1926. Copperplate etching on paper, 35 x 27. Athens, GR: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation. | Gergő Gilicze (Hungary, b. 1990). *Ex Libris for István Orosz*, 2013. Linocut print on paper, 4 x 2. Courtesy of István Orosz, Budapest, HU.

More characteristically in the whole of the *Odyssey*, Homer describes at length the scene of Odysseus weeping among the Phaeacians when his own deeds in Troy are sung by Demodocus. "So the famous singer sang his tale, but Odysseus / melted and from under his eyes the tears ran down, drenching / his cheeks. As a woman weeps, lying over the body / of her dead husband, who fell fighting for her city and people / as he tried to beat off the pitiless day from city and children; / sees him dying and gasping for breath and winding her body / about him she cries high and shrill, while the men behind her, / hitting her with their spear butts

on the back and the shoulders, / force her up and lead *her* away into slavery, to have / hard work and sorrow and *her* cheeks are wracked with pitiful weeping. / Such were the pitiful tears Odysseus shed from under / his brows” (*ib.* 1965:8.521-533). Flaxman accurately represented the scene in which the king of Phaeacians Alcinous “alone understood what he did and noticed / since he was sitting next to him and heard him groaning heavily” (*ib.* 1965:8.534-535). More interestingly, however, the above simile is the closest Homer brought Odysseus to his comparison with a woman and a widow in particular. For the majority of the quoted lines (524-530) all the female pronouns allude to Odysseus. In the knowledge that Duchamp created the *Fresh Widow* in 1920 and engaged with transvestism physically with *Rose Sélavy* in 1921 (see II.5) suggests aligned transgender logic. Moreover, taking Joyce’s *Ulysses* to be a parody of the *Odyssey*, it makes sense to site the parallel instances in which Bloom sheds tears. Though Homer compares Odysseus’ weeping before a king to the understandable grief of a widow who is further forced into slavery, Joyce creates a hallucinatory scene in which the queer Bloom “weeps tearlessly” (Joyce 1934:15.531) before the masculinised mistress Bello in her brothel, who sneers, “Crybaby! Crocodile tears!” (*ib.* 1934:15.532). Bloom is portrayed, nearly as Homer indicated for Penelope, to take “pleasure of tearful lamentation” (Lattimore 1965:19.251).



John Flaxman
(England, 1755-1826).
The Odyssey of Homer, Plate XIII: Ulysses Weeps at the Song of Demodocus, 1805.
Etching on paper, 17 x 30.
London, UK: Tate Gallery.

As a matter of fact, the entire amount of Odysseus’ tears in the *Odyssey* may best be matched with those of Penelope. This fact suggests that Odysseus and Penelope are closer at heart than generally perceived. The same can perhaps be said for Duchamp and his fictive bride. The identification of the two is suggested by the exhibition title *Dancing around the Bride*, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2012 and its subtitle *Duchamp with Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg and Johns* at the Barbican Centre, London, in 2013. So, it may well be that Duchamp associates as much with Odysseus as Penelope. An evocative illustration of this aspect is Richard Avedon’s photograph of *Marcel Duchamp, Artist* of 1958, which presents him as an actor staging himself in the way of wiping away from his eyes tears or sweat. And though Duchamp must have shed real tears for the loss of all his family members that passed during his lifetime, he included the dropping of tears in what he called “wasted energies” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:191).

Finally, Duchamp resembles Odysseus in a further respect, relating to lifestyle. After being scolded by Melantho, the treacherous maid of Penelope, for seeking asylum in the palace, Odysseus responds, “I wonder, why do you hold such an angry grudge against me? / Is it because I am dirty and wear foul clothing upon me, / and go about as a public beggar? The need is on me, / for such is the lot of vagabonds and men who are homeless.” (Lattimore 1965:19.71-74). Homer offers clear evidence that his royal protagonist was fully aware of his role as the very opposite – a poor and old beggar. In another scene, the oxherd Philius said by seeing the strange beggar, “Unlucky man; he is like a king and a lord in appearance. / Yet it is true; the homeless men are those whom the gods hold / in despite, when they spin misery even for princes.” (*ib.* 1965:20.194-196). Here unfolds the paradox likening a destitute individual to a nobleman. Despite being known as a dandy unduly devoted to style, neatness and fashion in dress and appearance, Duchamp led an idle life that subscribed, according to his own claim (Cabanne 1971:25, 58), to *la vie de bohème* (bohemianism), the non-traditional lifestyle of marginalised and impoverished artists, writers, journalists, musicians and actors in major European cities. Bohemians were associated with unorthodox or anti-establishment political or social viewpoints, which often were expressed through free love, frugality and, in some cases, voluntary poverty. Despite being the son of a bourgeois notary, who duly supported all his children alike, Duchamp had a life indifferent to wealth or riches. Unable to pay in cash his American dentist, Dr Daniel Tzanck, in Paris, Duchamp crafted and signed a false cheque dated 3 December 1919, written to the amount he was billed – one hundred and fifteen dollars. Delighted by this real-life signed imitated rectified readymade, Dr Tzanck kept the cheque for many years until Duchamp was able to buy this work back at a far greater sum than the fee for his dental cavity fillings. Even so, throughout his life, Duchamp led an unconventional lifestyle, whose context was close to Odysseus as wanderer-adventurer-vagabond. What mattered above all was his individuality that made him unique in any circumstance, like Odysseus. Duchamp was the personification of the ego as an individual self. As Duchamp proclaimed in his 1960 lecture at Hofstra College, Hempstead, New York, in which he also invoked Max Stirner’s book *The Ego and Its Own* (1845), “Internal or spiritual values, [...] of which the artist is so to speak the dispenser, concern only the individual singled out in opposition to the general values which apply to the individual as part of a society.” (quoted in *Ephemerides*, entry for 13/5/1960). Duchamp’s Stirnerian individualism/egoism is best exemplified by the ever-uprooted and shipwrecked Odysseus.

II.3

Duchamp's Odyssean Strategy of Dissimulation

Comparing life to a play, William Shakespeare has Jaques – a pun on *jakes*, the Elizabethan slang for a privy – utter “All the world’s a stage” (*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII, Line 138). With an interest to live life to the fullest, Duchamp experiments with acting. In so doing, he appears to follow the Odyssean stratagem of dissimulation as a means to achieve his ends – to lose and/or blur his true identity as a necessary or even desirable premise in matters of the arts.



Francesco Bertolini / Giuseppe de Liguoro / Adolfo Padovan (Italy). *The Odyssey: Athene disguises Odysseus into Beggar*, 1911. Film drama, 43:53. Milan, IT: Milano Films.



Honoré Daumier (France, 1808-1879). *Ancient History - Plate 7: The Return of Odysseus, The Charivari*, 24/4/1842. Lithograph on wove paper, 25 x 22. New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Odysseus’ legendary reputation throughout time is well founded. He had an unparalleled personality, which helped him withstand challenges and overcome obstacles. His means for doing so was dissimulation. He was an accomplished actor (Hall 2008:35). Helen remembered how, long ago at Troy, “He flagellated himself with degrading strokes, then threw on / a worthless sheet about his shoulders. He looked like a servant. / So he crept into the wide-wayed city of the men he was fighting, / disguising himself in the likeness of somebody else, a beggar, one who was unlike himself beside the ships of the Achaeans, but in his likeness crept into the Trojans’ city and they all / were taken in.” (Lattimore 1965:4.244-250). A decade later, in order to restore himself as King of Ithaca, Odysseus was obliged to follow a carefully calculated dissimulation scheme. To conceal his return to Ithaca and avoid being recognised by the suitors, Athena effectually disguised the renowned Odysseus into another figure that gives up wide fame, strong physique and financial power. Milano Films’ 1911 *Odyssey* employed the fading technique to enact the moment of disguise. Though this cinematic effect might not impress today’s spectators, it would have been sensational at the time. It must have impressed viewers as a miracle happening before their very eyes. In any case, the thought that to deserve his royal status and privileges a worthy king should accept the disguise as his direct opposite – that is an insignificant figure embodying old age and poverty – is rather ingenious. And it was probably this spirit of genius that Daumier raised by satirising the subject of Odysseus’ return to Ithaca. His lithograph shows on a rough-edged stele a relief of the protagonist as a decrepit beggar playing the clarinet and enlisting his faithful dog Argus on a leash to his new cause of busking for money. The caption reads, “At the gates of the palace, his faithful poodle / The only old friend to suddenly recognise, / And have the sublime instinct! to grab a bowl / To assist Odysseus in his crafty purpose.” Turning Odysseus’ beloved dog into a Parisian

poodle with a ridiculous coiffure heightens the irony. Such a dissimulation is only temporary, but serves as the recipe of a challenge that may allow a king, disputed due to his lengthy absence, to discern the specific means by which to reclaim and maintain power. Odysseus carefully chose whom to disclose himself from. He concealed his identity from dreadful enemies of course, such as the lording suitors, but also close people, such as his wife Penelope. At the same time, despite his will, he could not avoid being recognised by his faithful dog Argos, who died of old age soon thereafter or from his loyal wet nurse Eurycleia, who recognised a childhood scar on him as she washed his feet.

Aesop's fable of the oak and the reed, dealing with their contrasting behaviour during the storm, of the former who falls from overconfidence in her stiffness and the latter who bends and thus survives, probably best explains why Odysseus chose so often to come out of himself. Odysseus was the archetype of the man who manages on his own, despite the aid of goddess Athena. He would have to set his mind at work in order to arrive at solutions that were intrinsic to the problem depending on the particular case. That is why he was forced to dissimulate and acquire different personas. Before Nausicaä, on the island of Scheria, he revealed his true identity as Odysseus, king of Ithaca. Before Cyclops, he was Noman. In the presence of the suitors lording his palace, he was an old beggar. Odyssean dissimulation is akin to the profession of acting, the art of illusion that yields pleasure for its spectators. Duchamp was likewise attracted to the art of *mimesis*, the imitation of life. In his long artistic career Duchamp acquired different identities. Even as his female alter ego, Rose Sélavy, his strategy was to vary her appearance – as a pseudonymous signature in 1921; as herself in Man Ray's portraits of the same year; as alias of the bandit George W. Welch on the *Wanted: \$2,000 Reward* poster of 1923; again in drag as the boxer Georges Carpentier in Picabia's *Portrait of Rose Sélavy* of 1924; as a substitute mannequin in drag in 1938. Furthermore, Duchamp appeared as the devil to the bourgeois (see: Heap 1924:18; Ades 2013:42) in Man Ray's portrait for the *Monte Carlo Bond* of 1924; as a woman in his *Compensation Portrait* in 1942; as himself at the age of 85 in 1945; and finally in drag with blond wig in 1955. All these examples indicate that Duchamp was interested in privileging false over true identity. As a matter of fact, Duchamp's success at staging different personas for himself became the source of inspiration for Julien Lévy's spoofing *FBI Wanted Notice* of 1950. Using as its foundation an easily available poster created by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lévy cast his friend as Edward Aloyisus Hannon, a forger sought by the law for impersonation. Perhaps Lévy's *Wanted Notice* serves as a pun suggesting dissimulation as a necessary or even desirable premise in matters of the arts.



Julien Lévy
(France, 1906-1981).
FBI Wanted Notice: Edward Aloyisus Hannon (Marcel Duchamp), Wanted for the Crime of Impersonation, 1950.
Letterpress card stock with gelatin silver prints attached, 20 x 20.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The ingenious thought that to reclaim his royal status and privileges Odysseus should previously accept dissimulation as his direct opposite must have appealed to Duchamp. Interestingly, it seems that Duchamp chose to reverse Odyssean dissimulation – his disguise strategy involved covering commonality with nobility. In Richard Huelsenbeck's *Phantastische Gebete (Fantastic Prayers)* sequence of *Dadascope*, appears a *tableau vivant* with impromptu props in which the viewer hardly recognises Duchamp. He disguised himself as King enthroned, wearing a crown, clad in a broached cape and sporting a very long beard. He appears with eyes closed from the fatigue caused by his preceding supposed deeds. Perhaps this picture of Duchamp is the closest he came to impersonate the adventurous Odysseus in a bored state after being restored as King of Ithaca.



Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
Still from Dadascope: Fantastic Prayers, 1956-1961/1965.
Film, 39:08.
Paris, FR: Centre Georges Pompidou.

II.4

Transvestism's Allure for Duchamp

Gender transgression via transvestism is first cited in ancient Greek mythology. Earliest were instances of male-to-female transgressions. In punishment for his murder of Iphitus, Heracles was given to Omphale as a slave doing women's work and cross-dressed as a woman. Tiresias was turned into a woman after angering the goddess Hera by killing a female snake that was coupling. This latter instance of transgression was significant because it gave the reason for Tiresias' famed wisdom.



John Flaxman
(England, 1755-1826).
*The Odyssey of Homer, Plate V:
Telemachus in search of
his Father, 1805.*
Etching on paper, 17 x 31.
London, UK: Tate Gallery.

herdsman (*ib.* 1965:8.223). Of course, Athena had the capacity to convincingly transform into either gender, because she was no ordinary woman, but born from the male pregnancy in the head of Zeus. Therefore, in her capacity as female, she incorporated the attributes of the classical male principle. Homer is clear that Athena had the mastery of “likening herself to Mentor in voice and appearance” (*ib.* 1965:2.268). John Flaxman memorably represented her with a full beard as Mentor leading Odysseus' son to the citadel of Pylos in his 1805 illustration *Telemachus in Search of his Father* for Alexander Pope's line “Telemachus already prest the shore; / Not first, the Pow'r of Wisdom march'd before,” (Pope 1806:3.15-16).

Nancy Felson-Rubin used the examples of Athena taking on the appearance and roles of men, to explain how the audience can respond in a cross-gendered way to the narrative. The arguments of Felson-Rubin give a male Homer a feminine voice in challenging gender roles. She saw the possibility for audience members of both genders to identify with characters of either gender, “Female listeners are as free as their male counterparts to occupy the subject position of the suitors, if they so wish, or of Odysseus or Telemachus or Agamemnon. That is, they, like Athena, can cross-dress, as it were and the division between the genders is not necessarily so restrictive as scholars commonly imagine. If women attended ancient epic performances, perhaps they too stepped into gender identifications that differed markedly from what was available to them in their daily lives.” (Felson-Rubin 1994:xi). So, owing to the fluidity of gender, a listener or reader of the *Odyssey* is invited to try on any gender roles regardless of his or her own.

Of course, transvestism was gloriously expressed in art first through Homer's *Odyssey*. However, as a phenomenon, it was deeply rooted within culture and religion. In the cult of god Hermaphroditus, worshippers enacted a transvestite rite, where men and women wore clothes of the other gender and women additionally wore false beards. Transvestism was further practiced by the Galli, eunuch priests of the Phrygian goddess Cybele and her consort Attis. They emasculated themselves by castration at the height of their ecstasy during a celebration called the *Dies Sanguinis* (*Day of Blood*). Following castration, they discarded their male attire forever and indulged in an extravagant personal appearance. Henceforth they wore the *stola*, a long garment, mostly yellow or many coloured with long sleeves and a belt. These priests wore a tiara on their heads, ornamental reliefs on their chest and further pendants, earrings and rings. They also wore their hair long and bleached and wore heavy make-up. They wandered around with followers, begging for charity, in return for which they were prepared to tell fortunes. Considering that their name ‘Galli’ is linked to the Gauls, Celtic tribes of Galatia in Anatolia, as well as that the word ‘Gallus’ is also the Latin word for rooster, which became an unofficial national symbol of France, it may be that Duchamp had the Galli in mind. The comparison of the *Statue of Attis* of c. 150 and the *Rose Sélavy* mannequin of 1938 is evocative of a related gender transgression. The first represents Attis as an emasculated Gallus priest, while the latter is a reversal involving a female mannequin dressed in Duchamp's male clothes – oversized shoes, coat, vest, tie and hat. The absence of pants, which leaves the mannequin's lower part naked, further

Anonymous (Rome, c. 2nd).
Statue of Attis as Gallus Priest, c. 150.
Marble, H:193.
Rome, IT: Musei Capitolini.

Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1878-1968).
Rose Sélavy, Jan. 1938, Paris.
Female wax mannequin, dressed
in Duchamp's clothes (life-size).
Present location unknown.
Los Angeles, CA: The Getty
Research Institute.



serves to evidence her feminine pubic area that is signed “Rose Sélavy”. A red electric lamp, surfacing from within the coat’s breast pocket, relates Rose Sélavy to the oldest known profession nowadays in red light districts.

Owing to their mutual admiration of Homer, the giants of European literary intelligentsia – Goethe, Shakespeare, Apollinaire, Eliot, Pound and Joyce – were preoccupied one way or another with the theme of transvestism. Of all of them, it was Goethe who eloquently explained its allure. In January 1787, during his tour of Italy, he saw an all-male performance of Goldoni’s *La Locandiera* (1753), which convinced him that a man performing femininity is more of an artist (*The Humboldtian Tradition* 2014:69). In 1788, after returning from Italy, he wrote an essay called *Women’s Roles in the Roman Theatre Played by Men*, which describes his experience.

I reflected on the reasons why these singers pleased so greatly and I think I have found it. In these representations, the concept of imitation and art was invariably more strongly felt and through their able performance a sort of conscious illusion was produced. Thus double pleasure is given in that these persons are not women, but only represent women. The young man has studied the properties of the female sex in essence and behaviour; he knows them thoroughly and reproduces them like an artist; he performs not himself but a third nature absolutely foreign to him. We come to know this nature even better because someone else has observed it, reflected on it and presents us not with the thing itself but with the result of the thing. (Quoted in Senelick 2000:196).

Goethe’s views on *castrati* echoes those on the female men in French neoclassical art and the cultural and political discourses concerned with sexual differences (*The Humboldtian Tradition* 2014:71). It was this art of *mimesis* that likewise appealed to Duchamp. He turned gender transgression into *art*, as a means to exert a pleasing, alluring, or fascinating influence upon his audience. Transvestism first preoccupied Duchamp with *L.H.O.O.Q.* of 1919, where a readymade in the form of a reproduction of Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa* is summarily transformed into a man. In 1921 he reversed the same operation in Man Ray’s series of photographs of himself as Rose Sélavy. His *Rose Sélavy* mannequin of 1938 was ingenious because with it Duchamp indulged in a double gender reversal – in this specific instance, she appeared in drag wearing his clothes. In all other circumstances, the artist indulged his taste for impersonation entirely differently, although without renouncing his adopted female name. Thus she is mentioned among the aliases of the bandit George W. Welch on the *Wanted: \$2,000 Reward* poster of 1923. In addition, she emerged again in Picabia’s *Portrait of Rose Sélavy* of 1924 again in drag in the guise of the boxer Georges Carpentier. (see p. 194). Duchamp, however, chose to present under his given name a photograph of a woman, with weathered features, for his *Compensation Portrait* in the catalogue of *First Papers of Surrealism*, New York, in 1942. On 9 April 1950, Duchamp signed his letter to Fiske Kimball, director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923), the famous actress who had often played herself *en travesty* in Alfred de Musset’s *Lorenzaccio* (1896), Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1899) and Edmond Rostand’s *L’Aiglon* (1900). As all these examples indicate, what counted first and foremost for Duchamp was not the disguise and still less cross-dressing in the crude sense of the term, but rather successfully losing, blurring his true identity as a genuine artist (*Eroticism* 2007:233-234).

Unlike the ancient heritage, when transvestism was matter of fact embedded within cultural and religious structures, its modern version appeared as a possible escape into a fantasy world free from the oppression of male existence (Brierley 1979:101). Having Dr Nixon read a bill of health on Bloom, Joyce introduced him in the *Circe* episode as a “new womanly man” (Joyce 1934:15.483) to refer to his simple and lovable moral nature, as opposed to a hated sexist patriarch. Subsequently in the same episode, a waking dream scene, whose hallucinatory quality unleashes imagination, was transferred by Joseph Strick into a circus ring, featuring a feminised servant Bloom deriving sexual gratification from a masculinised mistress Bello. Bloom willingly gets debased with transvestism and this episode provides a cathartic effect of that debasement.

It seems that Duchamp experimented with transvestism as a “space of possibility structuring and confounding culture” (Garber 1992:17). Joanna Pitman argued that Duchamp’s employment of the female alter ego relates to a complex broadening concept of what it means to be an artist. Creating works under the name of his alternative feminine personality, Duchamp “expanded the possibilities of what constituted a work of art” (Pitman 2008) by questioning artistic identity, challenging bourgeois conventions and breaking taboos.

Joseph Strick
(USA, 1923-2010).
Still from the *Circe Episode* in
***Ulysses*, 1967.**
Film drama, 01:12:00.
London, UK: British Lion Films.



II.5

Duchamp as *Penelope*: Loving, Mournful and Cold-Hearted

In Homer's *Odyssey* tempting women are represented by three types of femininity – the safe comfort of nymph Calypso, the sexual pleasures of goddess Circe and the excessive beauty of princess Nausicaä. First, throughout his seven years stay at Ogygia, the phantom island, Calypso received Odysseus with full care and “promised to make me an immortal and all my days to be ageless, / but never so could she win over the heart within me” (Lattimore 1965:7.257-258). It is striking that Joyce represented Calypso as Molly herself, with reference to the idea that the *Odyssey* was only in the mind of an Odysseus that was in the slavish service of Penelope. In view of Molly's approaching affair with her concert manager and the impending sexual activity of his 15-year-old daughter, Milly, Bloom chose to respond passively until all such inescapable activity calmed and passed. Second, on the mythical island of Aeaea, where Circe lived with her nymph attendants, Odysseus was invited to eat from a “polished table”, but “nothing pleased my mind and I sat there thinking of something else, mind full of evil imaginings” (*ib.* 1965:10.370, 373-374). Joyce illustrated this scene as the sexual temptation of a bordello run by a madam with prostitutes, which Bloom enjoyed to the point he resisted. Finally, Odysseus encountered the maiden Nausicaä, daughter of king Alcinous and queen Arete of the Phaeacians. She was so beautiful, prompting Odysseus to say, “Wonder takes me as I look on you.” (*ib.* 1965:6.161). But she was young and unmarried with life ahead of her and all he could expect of her was to seek her help in finding his way back to Ithaca. Odysseus fastly kept Penelope in mind, who was an aging woman, less versed in sex and down to earth. So, in this preference lies the stereotype of man's strange attraction to his mortal destination. The philosophical explanation may be simple – that divination lacks the challenge that makes a relation attractive. Odysseus preferred Penelope because therein he was likely to find the exchange of human experience. Who, then, is Penelope and what is her true nature that made her personality as much irresistible to Odysseus as a possible model for Duchamp? Penelope is an unusual amalgam of a loving, mournful and cold-hearted person. These three qualities associated with her are actually contradictory and impossible to co-exist, but form a paradox that appeals to the human subconscious. What Odysseus firmly proved to himself is that reality, not fantasy, is the ideal match for him.

From the beginning of the epic, Penelope is introduced as a detached yet fully alert person. Listening intently to Phemius sing the homecoming from Troy of the Achaeans, she brings Odysseus to mind. She is the prototype of the faithful wife that truly loves her husband and worries for his fate. Known to be a moral prototype of goodness and chastity, it matters exceptionally that Agamemnon's soul, the cuckolded king who lost his life from his unloving and treacherous wife, informs Odysseus that Penelope “is all too virtuous and her mind is stored with good thoughts” (*ib.* 1965:11.446). To this fact attested earlier also the soul of his mother Anticlea (*ib.* 1965:11.181). Despite such trustworthy reassurances, Athena acknowledges Odysseus' ever-inquisitive nature, telling him what he knows about himself only too well, that “it is not / your pleasure to investigate and ask questions, not till / you have made trial of your wife; yet she, as always, sits there in your palace and always with her the wretched / nights and the days also, waste her away with weeping.” (*ib.* 1965:13.334-338).

Because of her efforts to put off remarriage, Penelope serves as a symbol of faithful love and connubial fidelity and is even recognizable as such in Western art from the Greco-Roman world to the beginning of Modernism in the 19th century. Setting the archetype of the ideal wife, she often appears seated alone and her protectively crossed knees reflect her chastity during Odysseus' long absence, an unusual pose in any other figure. In addition to her bodily position, she is further recognised by her melancholy mood, the reflective gesture of leaning her cheek on her hand. Despite its small size, a wedding finger-ring of the late Classical period unmistakably represents her (see p. 161). Therein, she appears highly stylised, seated in her typical position. She wears a long and pleated chiton, covering her body down to the ankles. She also bends forward, resting her head on her hand pensively in grief. A composition similar to that of the ring is echoed in the round by a Roman statue, which is a copy of a lost Greek original of the 5th century BC. Again, Penelope is depicted seated cross-legged alone in the familiar thoughtful disposition. Being nearly life-size, however, it is possible to further appreciate the representation of melancholy on her facial expression, solemnly looking downwards, away from the spectator's gaze. Her fully clad body, except for her arms, suggests introspection and solitary confinement. The gesture of her upward hand, though replacing the lost original, gently points to her mind as source of her precious thoughts. She has her loved man in mind and her thoughts are hardly disturbed by other matters.

Penelope's gaze, loaded with meaning of longing and virtue, seems to inform the photograph *Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy* of 1921. In this portrait, the femininity of Duchamp's alter ego Rose Sélavy emerges for the first time. One of the several variants photographed at the same sitting, Man Ray took it in

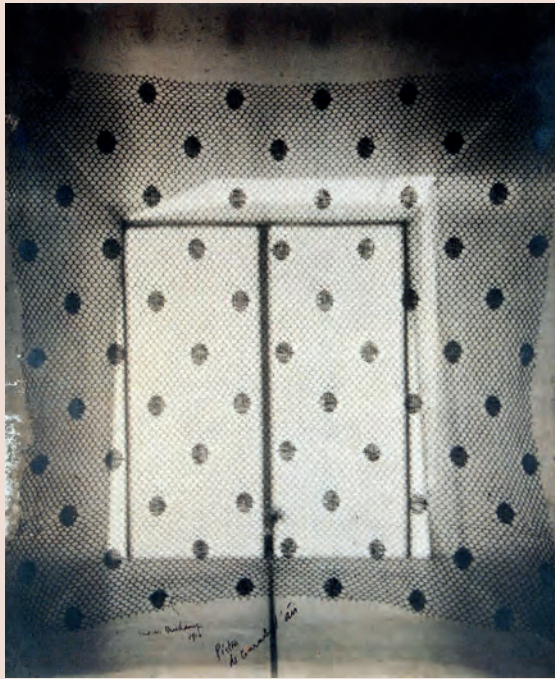


Anonymous (Rome, c. 1st). *Penelope*, c. 100. Marble, H:123. Vatican City State, VA: Musei Vaticani. | Man Ray (USA, 1890-1976). *Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy*, Summer 1921, Paris. Gelatin silver print, 22 x 18. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Paris sometime after his arrival there in the summer of 1921. In contrast to other surviving photographs of Rose Sélavy, the seductive gaze and fashionable attire of this one projects what it conceals – a well-staged feeling of love for the one she is missing. Here, Rose Sélavy does all in her capacity to arouse desire in her ideal voyeur. Though Duchamp had the habit of cutting all his body hair like swimmers do (Magi 2011:167), the hands appearing in this photograph, so much expressive of love, are unmistakably female. Duchamp’s inscription on a third print reveals that the hat and hands belonged to his friend Germaine Everling, the second wife of Picabia. The fashionable hat with patterned headband endows with the necessary contemporary air its hopelessly romantic subject. The true female hands and the unparalleled manner by which they handle the fur add to the sitter’s sensuous allure.

In a climactic moment, Penelope’s loving of Odysseus turns into mourning for his presumed death. In fact, she waited 20 years for the return of her husband. In the final three years, however, her waiting was definitively challenged by as many as 108 suitors (Lattimore 1965:16.245-253). To delay marrying one of them she devised the *Weaving Ruse* (see II.6). After that period of grace, however, this wife of old was forced to turn into a fresh widow. Without knowing that the stranger in her palace is her husband in disguise, she told him that the high time had come to accept making herself available to the winner of a contest, “the one I will go away with, forsaking this house / where I was a bride.” (ib. 1965:19.579-580).

The first picture that the reader of the *Odyssey* has of Penelope is “holding her shining veil in front of her face, to shield it” (ib. 1965:1.334). The veil is the traditional article, often made of lace, which hangs from a hat or headdress to cover the face of a bride or widow. As used since ancient times in Greece, the veil is intended to express honour, but its actual cultural and psychological function includes the maintenance of social distance. It could be under this influence that Duchamp chose a black mourning veil to create in 1914 the three *Draft Piston* photographs. Illustrated here is one of three photographs that he took of netted fabric with dotted pattern of *pois* (literally beans) placed in front of an open window with air current blowing through to determine the outlines of the three irregular tetrahedrals in the *Cinematic Blossoming* at the top of the *Glass* (see p. 148). The possible relation of this work to Penelope’s mourning is further augmented by Duchamp’s *Fresh Widow*, an assisted readymade. In Duchamp’s lecture *Apropos of Myself*, delivered at the City Art Museum of Saint Louis in 1964, he noted, “This small model of a French window was made by a carpenter in New York in 1920. To complete it I replaced the glass panes by panes made of leather, which I insisted should be shined every day like shoes. French Window was called *Fresh Widow*, an obvious enough pun.” (d’Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:241). With *Fresh Widow*, Duchamp enacted a readily discernible pun through a simple phonemic alteration, the deletion of ‘n’ from “French” and “Window.” The work’s form is similar to a French window, with double casement closing against each other without a frame in between them. Yet, freestanding at a height of 80 cm, with black leather covering the glass panes, *Fresh Widow* far from serves a utilitarian purpose. It is not a window onto something else, but the rejection of a view. As Duchamp noted in his 1946 interview with James Johnson Sweeney,



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Draft Piston*, 1914. Gelatin silver print, 60 x 49. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | Marcel Duchamp (ib.). *Fresh Widow*, Autumn 1920, New York. Miniature French window: painted wood frame and eight panes of glass covered with black leather, 78 x 45 on wood sill, 2 x 53 x 10. New York, NY: The Museum of Modern Art.

“For me the title was very important” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:125). Its punning title supports an interpretative variability. *Fresh Widow* seems to allude to the mourning Penelope and refer by extension as much to the First World War widows, as to Duchamp’s physical displacement from France. What is more, this work is the birth certificate of the name Rose Sélavy (becoming Rrose in 1921), whose connection to Penelope is hereby claimed. Interestingly, in all of the few surviving photographs of Duchamp in his guise as Rrose Sélavy, he always wears black and his expression is rather sombre, as if in mourning. Apart from Penelope’s conviction that she was widowed owing to Odysseus’ lengthy absence, widowhood also features metaphorically in *Ulysses* with Molly’s bed that was widowed owing to Bloom’s lengthy abstinence from sex.



André Morain (France, b. 1938). Paul Delvaux posing with *Young Girl in Front of a Temple* (1949), 1949. Courtesy of Fondation Paul Delvaux, St Idesbald, BE.

that year shows Delvaux before the recently completed *Young Girl in Front of a Temple*, making it a point of identification to imitate its protagonist’s pensive gesture. In this photograph, Delvaux, like Duchamp’s Rrose Sélavy, reverberates Penelope. What is more, it seems Homer’s *Odyssey* related to his biography, especially considering the similarity of Penelope with Tam, who also waited twenty years for her lover. Their love for one another ignited in 1929, but the relationship foundered because of his parents’ disapproval of her. In 1937 he married Suzanne Purnal, which was an unhappy affair. However, ten years later in 1947, completely by chance whilst visiting St Idesbald, he reconnected with his first real love, divorcing his wife. The pair married on 25 October 1952.

Besides her passive qualities as loving and mournful, Penelope is also powerful; the one to rule Ithaca in the long absence of her wedded king and ratify the successor of Odysseus in the event that she married one of her suitors. The fact that this prerogative belonged to her is a memory of age-old matriarchy in the Bronze Age (c.3000-1050 BC). In a way, she is a heroine, when, in the so-called Homeric Age (c.1100-800 BC), heroism was reserved exclusively for men. The fact is that Odysseus in disguise as a beggar addressed Penelope as a masculine woman, “Lady, no mortal man on the endless earth could have cause / to find fault with you; your fame goes up into the wide heaven, as of some king who, as a blameless man and god-fearing, / and ruling as lord over many powerful people, upholds the way of good government / and the black earth yields *him* / barley and wheat, *his* trees are heavy with fruit, *his* sheepflocks / continue to bear young, the sea gives *him* fish, because of *his* good leadership and *his* people prosper under *him*.” (Lattimore 1965:19.107-114), referring to her with the male personal pronoun. This philological device of subtly evoking the subject’s opposite gender, which was employed earlier in the epic when Homer compared Odysseus to a woman (*ib.* 1965:8.521-533), to make the point that genders are fluid, rather than fixed, must have appealed to Duchamp’s intellectual sensibility. Such masculine traits made the familiar loving and mournful Penelope appear cold-hearted, devoid of sympathy or feeling. Both her son and husband cite her cold heart. In response to Penelope’s sitting “long time in silence” (*ib.* 1965:23.93) opposite her husband after he was revealed to her, Telemachus scolded her with his true feelings for her, “No other woman, with spirit as stubborn as yours, would keep back / as you are doing from her husband who, after so much suffering, / came at last in the twentieth year back to his own country. / But always you have a heart that is harder than stone within you.” (*ib.* 1965:23.100-103). Odysseus accepted her doubting nature, until, after fixing himself up and with the aid of Athena “looking like an immortal” (*ib.* 1965:23.163), he too complained, “You are so strange. The gods, who have their homes on Olympus, / have made your heart more stubborn than for the rest of womankind. [At this point he repeats the words of Telemachus] ...this woman has a heart of iron within her.” (*ib.* 1965:23.166-172).



From left to right: Álvaro Barrios (1980); Yasumasa Morimura (1988); Jean-Yves Jouannais (2000); Emilio López-Menchero (2005); Robert Wilson (2006); Alvaro Tapia Hidalgo (2011).

As a matter of fact, the prominent fur in *Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy* serves the role of Penelope's veil like an impenetrable protective shield (Lattimore 1965:1.334). The original 1921 photograph as well as all its subsequent takes (see six illustrations with works by Álvaro Barrios, Yasumasa Morimura, Jean-Yves Jouannais, Emilio López-Menchero, Robert Wilson and Alvaro Tapia Hidalgo) bring to mind Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's 1870 novel *Venus in Furs*, in which a man dreams of speaking to Venus about love while she wears furs. In the novel's context, the fur emblematises a prop in a slave / despot relationship. Its point is that a man and a woman may lead a life of companionship only when she has the same rights as he and is his equal in education and work. On 26 October 1923, Duchamp wrote to his patron Jacques Doucet, "Rose Sélavy has a *femmes savantes* (learned ladies) side, which is not disagreeable" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:181). This statement suggests that Duchamp perceived his female alter ego Rose Sélavy as an intellectual comparable to himself. That level of harmonious companionship between Penelope and Odysseus was also achieved between Duchamp and Rose Sélavy.

Penelope's cold-hearted stance resembles Duchamp's resort to the "beauty of indifference" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30) as alternative to painting. He chose his art to be "neither one of affirmation or rejection" (Golding 1973:57), but rather one tinged with the irony and humour of indifference. The Duchampian notion of indifference is rather a gain for art practice and history. It applies especially to his readymades that are indifferent, that is, beyond considerations of beauty and ugliness or good and bad taste. By extension, the state of being indifferent is to accept existing neither for nor against but rather between states. Such an indifference may liberate the individual from conventions and norms. That, which Duchamp calls the "beauty of indifference", is freedom (Paz 1978:29). Penelope's cool silence (Lattimore 1965:23.93) and circumspect secrecy (*ib.* 1965:19.151) are also reminiscent of Duchamp's solitary and underground procedure, developing his art slowly in painstaking steps and precise stages in near total secrecy.

Duchamp's *His Twine* as Penelope's Weaving Ruse

II.6

Throughout the epic, Penelope's name is preceded steadily by the adjective "circumspect" (Lattimore 1965:1.328; 4.808, 830; 11.445; 15.314; 16.436; 17.162, 498, 553, 563, 585; 18.159, 177, 245, 250, 285; 19.53, 59, 89, 103, 123, 308, 349, 374, 559, 588; 20.387; 21.2, 311, 321, 330; 23.10, 58, 80, 104, 173 and 256) to suggest that she is wary and unwilling to take risks. What is more, in Greek folk etymology, the name *Penelope* is understood to combine the Greek word *pene* (weft), meaning the thread that is drawn through the warp yarns to create cloth, and the suffix *-elops*, referring to predatory animals. Thus, her name is considered to be the most appropriate for a cunning weaver whose motivation is to trap victims in her web.

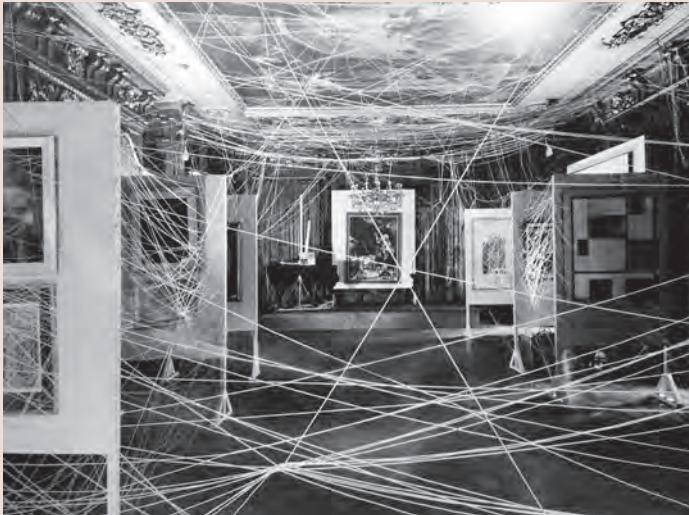
Celebrated as a symbol of patience and loyalty, Penelope is also known for her steadfastness and industriousness in the face of peril. Her 20-year wait for Odysseus was challenged in its last three years by as many as 108 suitors (see *Odyssey* 16.245-253), led by Antinous and including Agelaus, Amphinomus, Ctessippus, Demoptolemus, Elatus, Euryades, Eurymachus and Peisandros. Being the female counterpart of Odysseus, she proved to be as resourceful. To delay marrying one of them she devised the stratagem of the great loom, whereby she pretended to be weaving a burial shroud for the tomb of her elderly father-in-law Laertes, claiming that she would choose a suitor upon finishing it. Every night for three years she undid part of the shroud that she wove in the day, until Melanthe, one of twelve unfaithful serving women, discovered her chicanery and revealed it to the suitors.

Though Penelope's ruse of weaving was revealed to Telemachus by Antinous at an earlier point (Lattimore 1965:2.93-106), its full details are given to the reader when she recounted it to the stranger that was her husband in disguise, "First the divinity put the idea of the web in my mind, / to set up a great loom in my palace and set to weaving / a web of threads, long and fine. Then I said to [the suitors]: / «Young men, my suitors now that the great Odysseus has perished, / wait, though you are eager to marry me, until I finish / this web, so that my weaving will not be useless and wasted. / This is a shroud for the hero Laertes [...]» / So I spoke and the proud heart in them was persuaded. / Thereafter in the daytime I would weave at my great loom, / but in the night I would have torches set by and undo it. / So for three years I was secret in my designs, convincing / the Achaeans, but when the fourth year came with the seasons returning, / and the months faded and many days had been brought to completion, / then at last through my maidservants, those careless hussies, / they learned and came upon me and caught me and gave me a scolding. / So, against my will and by force, I had to finish it. / Now I cannot escape from this marriage" (*ib.* 1965:19.138-157). Flaxman faithfully represented the scene of Penelope at her great loom in the act of undoing her weaving under the torch light, when one of her maidservants leads the suitors in to catch her.



John Flaxman (England, 1755-1826). *The Odyssey of Homer, Plate IV: Penelope Surprised by the Suitors*, 1805. Etching on paper, 17 x 25. London, UK: Tate Gallery.

Penelope's *Weaving Ruse* was the delaying tactic she applied as a means of defending herself for three years. For Duchamp, the concept of delay was likewise very important. He used "Delay in Glass" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:26) as a kind of subtitle for his *Glass*. His aim was to create a delay "not so much in the different meanings in which delay can be taken, but rather in their indecisive reunion 'delay'" (*ib.* 1973:26). With 'delay', he appropriated from Homer the concept of postponement or deference of an action, which affects time with the desired consequences. Such a delay may be perceived as a chronological interval either anytime between the start and end of the work's actual fabrication from the viewpoint of the artist or the final work's representation of a time continuum for the beholder's experience.



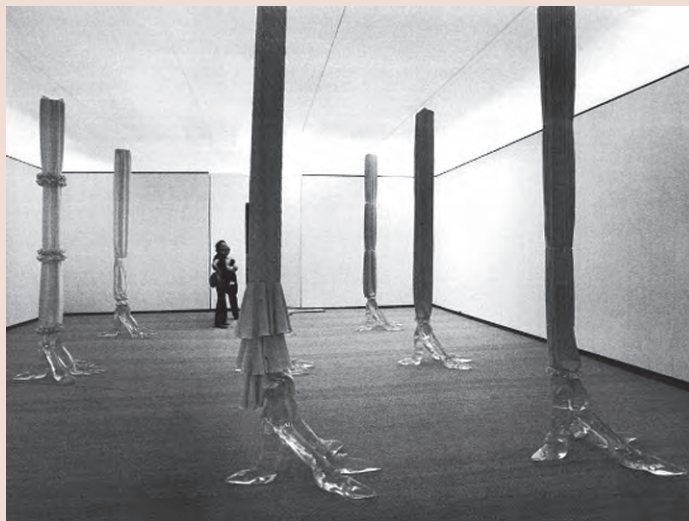
Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
His Twine, October 1942, New York. Installation for "First Papers of Surrealism" exhibition at Whitelaw Reid Mansion, New York, 14 October - 7 November 1942. Photo: John D. Schiff. Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA.

Janis' 11-year-old son to get together with friends of his and play all evening inside the exhibition opening without paying attention to anyone (Blesh 1956:200-201). With the twine alone, Duchamp had succeeded in turning an exhibition of art into a whimsical affair, a playful reordering of the gallery experience. The installation's original title was *His Twine*, as given by the exhibition catalogue. However, as news of the installation spread, Duchamp's handiwork became known as *Sixteen Miles of String*, but this catchy name is misleading, since no such length was ever used. As a matter of fact, the true title may also be understood as wordplay on "his twin", a reference to the friendship between Duchamp and Breton. More importantly, however, the significance of this work's idea was left open to free interpretation. For Schiaparelli, the twine was something of a guide, "directing visitors to this and that painting with a definite sense of contrast" (Kachur 2001:179). Edward Alden Jewell, the *New York Times* art critic, focused on the installation's functional effects, reporting that, "[the twine] forever gets between you and the assembled art and in so doing creates the most paradoxically clarifying barrier imaginable" (Alden Jewell 1942). Some visitors, such as Harriet and Sidney Janis, on the other hand, opted for more metaphorical interpretations. Believing the installation to be a comment on contemporary art, they wrote that Duchamp's use of twine "symbolised literally the difficulties to be circumvented by the uninitiate in order to see, to perceive and understand the exhibitions" (Janis 1945:18). Duchamp himself, though never providing any explicit interpretation of his twine, stressed more its functional value than its symbolic meaning. Wishing to downplay, even deny, the obstructing quality of his intervention, he claimed it was more transparent than opaque, saying in a 1953 interview, "It was nothing. You can always see through a window, through a curtain, thick or not thick, you can see always through if you want to, same thing there." (Duchamp quoted in Kachur 2001:183). In recalling the frustration some of the other participating artists felt for *His Twine*, Duchamp was unsympathetic. He doubted why "Some painters were actually disgusted with the idea of having their paintings back of lines like that, thought nobody would see their paintings." (Sidney, Harriet and Carroll Janis' unpublished interview with Duchamp 7-16; also quoted in Kachur 2001:189-190). In Duchamp's mind, *His Twine* acted as something of a veil (Vick 2008:www.toutfait.com). As such, *His Twine* connects with the mourning veil through which the widowed Penelope engaged with the world. This view resonated also with all the *fresh widows* that the Second World War was well on its way again to generate.

Despite his opinion on the matter, however, the fact is that Duchamp's actions reveal his real intentions – to obscure visibility, bar access and generally cancel what would otherwise be a conventional visual event. Consistent with his previous dystopic environment, the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* of 1938, *His Twine* posed a physical impediment to keep painting and its retinal seduction at bay. Given the context of the war at the time, these attempts at obstructing art took on added resonance. Resembling a giant cobweb, this installation commented on the obsolescence of art gone dusty in the midst of war, along with its modes of display (Judovitz 2005). The twine exposed the institutional strings attached to the display and consumption of art that secures the myth of its immutability (*ib.* 2005). It is precisely these conditions

of entanglement or trap that it reframes. Therefore, *His Twine* has generally been discussed in terms of separation and dislocation, echoing what T.J. Demos called “the maximal obstacle between paintings and viewing space” (Demos 2001:94). As such, this installation brings to mind not so much the *Weaving Ruse* that Penelope played out on her great loom, but its intended effect – the confinement or hindrance of suitors in her field. To appreciate the possible relation of the two, it is instructive to examine the eloquent and caustic ways in which the myth of Penelope and her suitors was adapted and reinterpreted in art after Duchamp.

At the 1972 Biennale da Venezia, Luciano Fabro’s programmed submission was *Feet*, a floor installation consisting of eight gigantic Murano glass claws, which were dressed in intricately sewn turquoise green Shantung silk pants, extending from the foot to the ceiling, each made according to a different type of sartorial technique employed by Fabro’s mother, a seamstress (Hecker 2011:67). *Feet* were subsequently accompanied by *Penelope*, a wall piece consisting of a single green silk twine that zigzagged from floor to ceiling, affixed to the wall with needles. Fabro’s twine installation emblematised Penelope’s design of deceit, which entrapped the suitors lording her palace and preying after her power.



Luciano Fabro
(Italy, 1936-2007).
Penelope / Feet, 1972.
Needles and silk thread / Murano
glass and Shantung silk
(dimensions variable).
Courtesy of Biennale di Venezia,
Venice, IT.

Tatiana Blass’ 2011 installation *Penelope* at Morumbi Chapel, São Paulo, consisted of a 14-metre-long red carpet extending from the chapel’s entrance to the altar, where its end was attached to a handloom equipped with foot pedal, thus giving the impression that the carpet weaving is under way. On the other side of the loom, tangled yarns were stretched out to pass through holes in the wattle-and-daub wall and reach the outside area. The red yarn took over the greenery of the chapel garden, covering the lawn and climbing shrubs and trees. In this process, it created an ambiguous movement of construction and deconstruction, in reference to the myth of Penelope. This created an impossible-to-colonise space, which might best be described as *dystopia*. This latter term is an antonym of *utopia*, meaning an imaginary and undesirable place where people are unhappy and usually afraid because they are not treated fairly.



Tatiana Blass
(Brazil, 1979). *Penelope*, 2011.
Installation: carpet, loom and
wool and chenille yarn
(dimensions variable).
São Paulo, BR: Morumbi Chapel.

Unlike the above clear references to Penelope’s *Weaving Ruse*, Joyce alluded to the undoing of the shroud as biological transformation for men and creative impersonation for the artist. On behalf of the author, Stephen said, “As we [...] weave and unweave our bodies, from day to day, their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image” (Joyce 1934:5.192).

II.7

Duchamp's *Belle Haleine* as the *Beautiful Helen of Troy*

The Beautiful Helen of Troy openly preoccupied Duchamp in his *Belle Haleine* of 1921. Providing a rare direct Homeric trace in Duchamp's Postmodernism, it plays a crucial role in this study. Therefore, it is important at this stage to focus on its particular context. In Greek mythology, Helen was of divine birth, daughter of Zeus and Leda and sister of Castor, Pollux and Clytemnestra, which made her a first cousin of Penelope. She was considered the most beautiful woman in the world. By marriage she was queen of Laconia, a province within Homeric Greece, the wife of king Menelaus. Her abduction by Paris, prince of Troy, brought about the Trojan War. Elements of her putative biography come from classical authors such as Aristophanes, Cicero and Euripides, but the earliest references are owed, of course, to Homer – in both his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* epics. In her youth she was rather willingly abducted by Theseus, who kept her until she would come of age to marry. Upon that moment's arrival, a competition between her suitors for her hand in marriage saw Menelaus emerge victorious. An oath sworn beforehand by all the suitors, known as the 'Oath of Tyndareus', required them to provide military assistance in the case of her abduction, which had the known devastating consequences.

The legends recounting Helen's fate are contradictory. It is alleged that when she married Menelaus she was still very young. Homer depicts her as a wistful, even sorrowful, figure, coming to regret her choice and wishing to be reunited with Menelaus. Other accounts portray a treacherous Helen who simulates Bacchic rites and rejoices in the carnage. Ultimately, Paris was killed in action and in Homer's account Helen was reunited with Menelaus, though other versions of the legend recount her ascending to Olympus instead. A cult associated with her developed in Hellenistic Laconia, both at Sparta and elsewhere; at Therapne she shared a shrine with Menelaus. She was also worshiped in Attica and on Rhodes. Her beauty inspired artists of all time to represent her, frequently as the personification of ideal beauty. Christopher Marlowe's lines from his 1604 tragedy *Doctor Faustus* are frequently cited: "Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" (Act V, scene i). Images of her start appearing in the 7th century BC. In classical Greece, her abduction by Paris was a popular motif. In medieval illustrations this event was frequently portrayed as a seduction, whereas in Renaissance painting it is usually depicted as a rape by Paris. "Helen on the ramparts of Troy" was a popular theme in late 19th century romantic art, remarkably by Moreau. In all these works Helen was portrayed as a tragic figure, embodying the moral fact that even wisdom may sometimes be foolish when it submits to beauty to the extent of inciting war.

The most memorable conventional representation of Helen was by the neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova. In 1811 he sculpted the *Bust of Helen* out of marble as a woman of ideal beauty with the classical characteristics of oval head, almond-shaped eyes, straight nose, thin lips and long wavy hair, two locks of which frame the face in corkscrew-shaped curls. Atop her beautiful hair she wears a simple *pileus* (brimless hat). Her countenance is characterised by soft features and a distant gaze. So beautiful was Canova's *Helen* that Lord Byron was moved to write a poem after he saw it in the residence of the Countess d'Albrizzi, Venice (now in The State Hermitage Museum), on November 1816 – "In this beloved marble view, / Above the works and thoughts of man, / What Nature could, but would not, do, / And Beauty and Canova can! / Beyond imagination's power, / Beyond the Bard's defeated art, / With immortality her dower, / Behold the Helen of the heart!" (Heffernan 1993:126).

Perhaps with an aim to mock at all this hype about Helen's mythical beauty, Duchamp was certainly reminded of the liberating transvestism in Roussel's *Impressions of Africa*, where the two rival monarchs, emperor Talu and king Yaour, challenge each other to death, willingly wearing, the former a "lady's wig of thick flaxen hair" (1966:211; 228) from the attire of the cabaret male soprano Carmichael, the latter a "flaxen wig with its two long plaits" (1966:279) of the Marguerite costume from Goethe's *Faust*. The kind of jarring discrepancy of such wigs on their native African heads must have been extraordinarily suited to bewilder, disorient and confuse their spectators. Arguably, Duchamp sought to achieve a similar arbitrary effect when he posed for Man Ray in a curly blonde wig belonging to his wife, Teeny. This wig served as a misplaced prop, like the moustache he gave Mona Lisa in *L.H.O.O.Q.* So, one of two surviving photographs from around 1955 shows Duchamp casually seated, wearing tie and coat with folded newspaper in pocket, holding his pipe and having this wig perched on his head. Its ringlets clearly echo in form Helen's rich hairdo. In terms of hue, Homer refrained from specifying the colour of Helen's hair, but described her by comparison as "shining among women" (Lattimore 1965:4.305; 15.106) and called her "sweet-haired" (*ib.* 1965:15.57). The "shining" quality of Helen is possibly a poetic way of saying that she was blonde (Maguire 2009:47). Post-Homeric tradition consistently portrayed her as fair-haired and particularly Pre-Raphaelite art often showed her with glistening curly hair and ringlets. This particular wig, however, is rather emblematic of the ideal woman's hair for Duchamp, as was Canova's programme, because in 1966

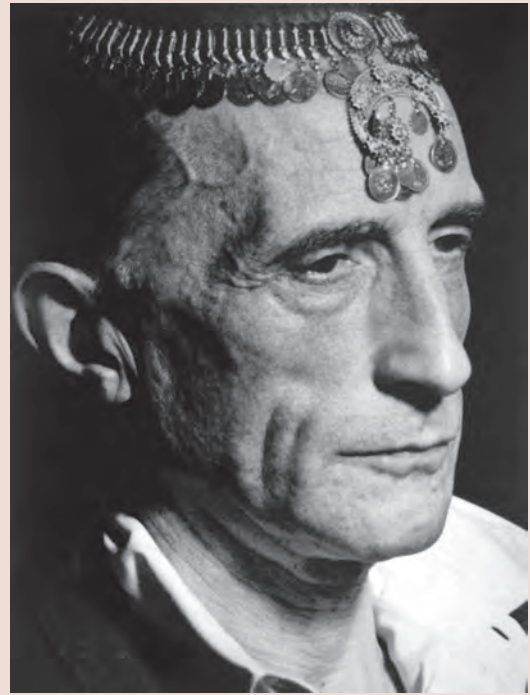


Antonio Canova (Italy, 1757-1822). *Bust of Helen*, 1812. Marble, H:64. London, UK: Victoria and Albert Museum. | Man Ray (USA, 1890-1976). *Marcel Duchamp in a Blonde Wig*, c. 1955. Polaroid, 8 x 6. Villiers-sous-Gréz, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives.

it was revealed to adorn the head of the mannequin in *Étant donnés*, his final *tableau vivant* of utopia (*Inventing Marcel Duchamp* 2009:218).

It is important to emphasise the influence of Heinrich Schliemann's official archaeological campaign at Hisarlık, the site of ancient Troy, which began on 11 October 1871. On 31 May 1873, during his third season there, in a layer of burnt ruins at a depth of 8.5 metres from the surface of the hill and in direct proximity of the so-called 'Scaean Gate', Schliemann discovered a unique collection, comprising 8830 objects made of gold, electrum, silver and bronze, which he collectively named "Priam's Treasure" (*The Gold of Troy* 1996:13). In absolute secrecy, with the aid of Frederick Calvert, he soon smuggled his precious find to Athens, where he deposited it in a bank. Soon thereafter, perhaps in the same year, he had his beautiful Greek wife, née Sophia Engastromenos, pose with highlights of it to a photographer as Helen of Troy. The photograph captures her wearing the most impressive set of golden jewels including a heavily ornamented diadem, matching earrings and loops of beaded necklaces, all nicely standing out against their dark surrounding ground, while bringing out the sitter's bright countenance. Schliemann took care to circulate this photograph to Europe with an aim to impress its most eminent archaeologists. Although these jewels were later ascribed to a period before the Trojan War, the portrait's credit indelibly remains *Mme Sophie Schliemann wearing the "Parure of Helen of Troy"*.

Once again such a valued icon may have provided Duchamp with yet another opportunity for sacrilege. His blasphemous programme may have been further informed by the witty fact that in his drama, *Helen* of 412 BC, Euripides used the chorus to promote two contradictory interpretations of his heroine – one as a "bitch-whore", and the other as a "noble lady". In a similar vein, nowadays, Bettany Hughes summed up in her book the various images of Helen through the ages as adored goddess, innocent princess and despised whore (Hughes 2005). Such a rich and inconsistent imagery would have exerted great appeal on Duchamp. In many ways, the mythic story of Helen marks the end of the age of heroes and consequent dawn of the new age of profanity. It was in this spirit that Duchamp might have chosen to deconstruct the myth of Helen. Thus, while in Hollywood in 1949, Duchamp had access to the prop of a golden *Turkish Coin Necklace*, which is part of the traditional wedding costumes worn by women in the Middle East. The coins are traditionally accumulated as part of the dowry of the bride and are fastened together into a headdress worn at special occasions. Likewise, the golden *Parure of Helen* intended to dazzle its spectators. So, once again Man Ray captured him this time wearing the headdress festooned with gold extensions that fall across his forehead. With such a traditional prop, it seems that both these *enfants terribles* had in mind Schliemann's legendary 1873 photograph, though no reference to it is known. Parodying the seriousness of Sophia Engastromenos' portrait (coincidentally *Engastromenos*, meaning pregnant, was a nickname of her father's surname Kastromenos), Duchamp appears in the guise of a procuress running a successful brothel.



Mme Sophia Schliemann wearing the “Parure of Helen of Troy” (1874), published in *The Gold of Troy*, 1996: 13. Courtesy of the Gennadius-Library American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Athens, GR. | Man Ray (USA, 1890-1976). *Marcel Duchamp with Turkish Coin Necklace on Forehead*, 1949, Hollywood. Gelatin silver print, 16 x 12. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The importance of Offenbach’s operetta *La Belle Héléne* cannot be overestimated. Perhaps more successfully than other art forms, this farcical opera profoundly impressed its audience with its humorous comment on contemporary life. It is not coincidental that around the time of its premiere, in 1864, the French chef Auguste Escoffier was inspired to create the *Poire belle Héléne* (*Beautiful Helen Pears*) recipe, which has been a classic dessert since. In the period from the performance of the historic operetta until the *Glass* was abandoned (1923), Helen became a fashionable subject in the visual arts, making her appearance notably in the painting of Gustave Moreau (12 works from 1860 to 1898), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1863), Frederic Leighton (1865), Anthony Frederick Augustus Sandys (1867), Jean-Baptiste Marty (1880), Henri Fantin-Latour (1892), Evelyn De Morgan (1898) and in the sculpture of Franz von Stuck (1909-1925). However, unlike the humour with which Offenbach and Escoffier invested their version of Helen, the other artists represented her rather solemnly. It was perhaps against such a return to seriousness that USA film director Frank P. Donovan (1892-1969) created his comedy *Helen of Troy* in 1917, about which unfortunately no further visual or literary record seems to survive.



Man Ray (USA, 1890-1976). *Rose Sélavy as Belle Haleine*, April 1921, New York. Gelatin silver print, 25 x 20. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

During 1921 Man Ray took bust photographs of Duchamp in women’s dress for the first time, initially in New York and later in Paris. The photographs from the first sitting, taken in April that year, capture Rose Sélavy, his female alter ego, assuming the identity of another pseudonym personality, *Belle Haleine* (*Beautiful Breath*), which is a pun on *Belle Héléne* (*Beautiful Helen*). As a rare direct link to a Homeric subject via a pun this work is extremely important. Duchamp’s impersonation of Helen is arguably an act of free expression. He aimed at parodying Helen as the most beautiful woman that since ancient times still has the power to inflame men’s passions. For the shoot, he employed a careful selection of props – glossy black wig, voluminously feathered large hat, double pearl choker, ornamental brooch, silk blouse and ruffled collared velvet cape. Looking at the resulting photograph it is possible to imagine Rose Sélavy standing in front of a mirror, carefully powdering her face, rimming her eyes in dark hues, painting her lips and clambering into the costume, finally placing the feathered hat low over her brow. The portrait is of a lushly draped lady, posing with a sideways glance and an expression to suggest that she was prepared to ignore society’s disbelieving gaze (Pitman 2008).

The fact that Rose Sélavy preferred to pose lugubriously, rather than with a gay smile, conveys the morbid feeling of a lone woman metaphorically widowed by the fate of the moment between successive courtships. This state recalls the mythical Helen, who tragically endured passing from one relation to the other, passively following the prevalence of power – from Theseus to Menelaus to Paris and back to Menelaus. The pose, then, likely captures melancholy not necessarily as a permanent depressive affliction, but as the state of waiting for erotic change to strike. At all events, melancholy is a sorrowful state that is carried on in

all the known photographs of Rose Sélavy at the time. Vasari, along with other writers, considered artists to be especially prone to melancholy by the nature of their work, sometimes with good effects for their art in increased sensitivity and use of fantasy (Britton 2003:653-675).



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Maquette for Belle Haleine: Eau de Voilette, 1921, New York. Imitated rectified readymade: photographic collage on paper, 52 x 20. Private Collection. | Marcel Duchamp (ib.). Belle Haleine: Eau de Voilette, 1921, New York. Assisted readymade: Rigaud perfume bottle with label created by Duchamp and Man Ray, perfume bottle, H:15, in oval cardboard box, 16 x 11. Paris, FR: Private Collection.

The aforementioned 1920 photograph of Rose Sélavy appeared in the spring of 1921 on the *Belle Haleine : Eau de Voilette* (*Beautiful Breath: Veil Water*), the famous assisted readymade, consisting of an appropriated perfume bottle and case. This bottle, designed by Julien Viard (1883-1938), was issued by the Parfumerie Rigaud of Paris in 1915 and originally contained *Un air embaumé* (*A Balmy Air*), the name the great French perfumer of the 19th century Jean-Baptiste Rigaud (1829-1898) gave to the most popular and best-selling fragrance the company had produced since its foundation in 1852.

Francis M. Naumann wrote about the appeal of the original on Duchamp, “Advertisements for this product feature a scantily clad female model holding a bottle of the perfume below her nostrils, the essence of the liquid rendered visible as an undulating, ribbon-like shape floating through the air. The model is shown taking a deep breath, her eyes closed and head tilted slightly back, as if to suggest that the scent possess the qualities of an aphrodisiac, rendering powerless all who inhale its intoxicating vapours. It may have been precisely these qualities that attracted Duchamp to this particular brand of perfume, for he wished to draw attention to the woman whose features are depicted on the bottle, his newly introduced female alter-ego: Rose Sélavy.” (Naumann 2008).

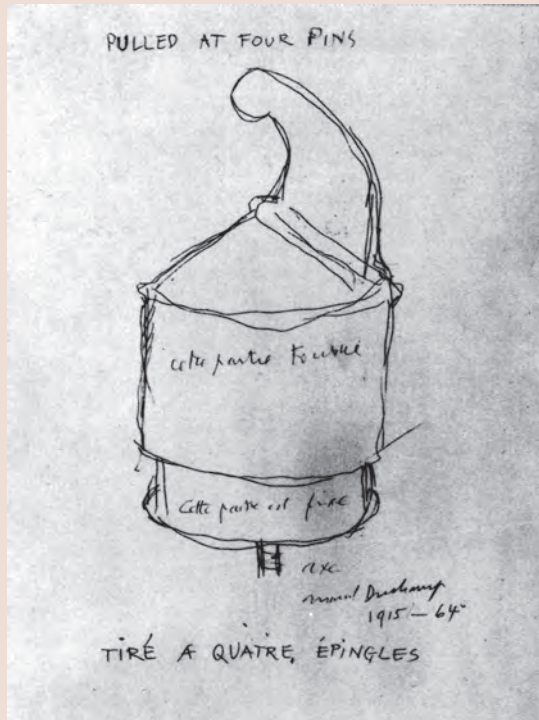


Parfumerie Rigaud (France, f. 1852). Advertisement for “Un Air Embaumé”, 1915, Paris.

Emptied from its content, the legendary Rigaud bottle was filled with the breath of Rose, thus evoking Duchamp’s earlier *Air de Paris* (*Air of Paris*) of 1919, the glass ampoule he bought from a Parisian pharmacist on the Rue Blomet, broken to empty from serum, mended after filling with air from Paris and eventually presented to his friends Louise and Walter Arensberg in New York in 1920. For the faux product, the original label was replaced with a new one featuring a collage of Man Ray’s photograph along with typography in his hand renaming the product “Belle Haleine / Eau de Voilette / RS / New York / Paris”. Playfully structured, the first part of the name reads *Belle Haleine*, which translates as *Beautiful Breath*. The second part is manipulated, twisting the phrase *Eau de Violette* (*Violet Water*) to read *Eau de Voilette* (*Veil Water*). Inverting the *i* and *o*, the reference is shifted from the name of the flower to the French word that means veil. A reminder of the 1864 operetta *La belle Hélène* (*The Beautiful Helen*) by Jacques Offenbach, the new perfume’s branding amusingly hints at the rather unattractive breath of a demigoddess “tart” (as the libretto calls her), who dresses or behaves in a way that is considered tasteless and sexually provocative. The particular photographic collage contains a significant inscription by Man Ray that reads, “Marcel Duchamp (par procuracy – Man Ray)”. The pretence of legitimacy created by means of power of attorney further alerts the spectator that the two are spoofing fabrications of identity and authenticity. The act of procuring deals with prostitution. A procurer is an agent who provides prostitutes in the arrangement of a sex act with a customer and collects part of their earnings. In this context, the work suggests that Man Ray as pimp provides Duchamp as a prostitute to the voyeur. The *Belle Haleine*’s relation to the *Beautiful Helen of Troy* then is clear evidence of Duchamp’s profane programme.

II.8

The Multifarious Origins of *Tiré à quatre épingles*



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Tiré à quatre épingles* (*Pulled at Four Pins*), 1915/1964, Milan. Copperplate etching on paper, 32 x 23. Milan, IT: Arturo Schwarz. | Douglas Vogel (USA, b. 1938). *Dressed to the Nines*, c. 1915/1999. Readymade: found antique chimney cap of galvanised and painted metal, 80 x 40 x 36. Courtesy of the artist, New York, NY.

Soon after arriving in New York in 1915, Duchamp was impressed by the everyday tin object of a chimney cap, a revolving ventilator placed at the top of a chimney stack to catch the draft and make it draw the fume better. In response, he chose it as one of his select few readymades that he named *Tiré à quatre épingles* (*Pulled at Four Pins*). As it was available in hardware stores during the first decades of the 20th century, he purchased one such cowl, inscribed it with its enigmatic title in French, signed it and gave it as a present to Louise Norton (1890-1989), who co-edited with her husband Allen the louche *Rogue* periodical. This readymade in unpainted grey tin was proudly displayed on the mantelpiece of her fireplace until tenants to whom she rented her home accidentally discarded it (Schwarz 1969:635). Louise's second husband, the radical French composer Edgard Varèse (1883-1965), admitted it was "a gift she was fond of and which the uninitiated are not up to appreciating" (letter from Varèse to Schwarz dated 15 September 1964 in Schwarz 1969:635). Unlike most of the other early readymades, the precise size and shape of this one was not recorded in a photograph. However, in 1964 Duchamp recalled the work from memory in an etching,

defining its lower part as fixed and its upper one as moving. Similar chimney caps can still be found atop buildings in large cities and in 1999 Douglas Vogel exhibited a found antique one from New York, painted red, which he titled *Dressed to the Nines*, as a replica of Duchamp's lost original.

The 1915 readymade was mentioned as a "weather vane" by Breton in *Phare de la Mariée* (Lebel 1959:91), Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia in *Fluttering Hearts* (*Cahiers d'Art* 1936) and Duchamp in a letter to Schwarz dated 15 September 1964 (see Schwarz 1969:635). Regardless of its naming, this unusual readymade is no random piece but seems to have an arcane rationale with multifarious origins in a rather peculiar mix of elements relating to both Homeric personages, Odysseus and Paris, that were variously revived in the French revolution.

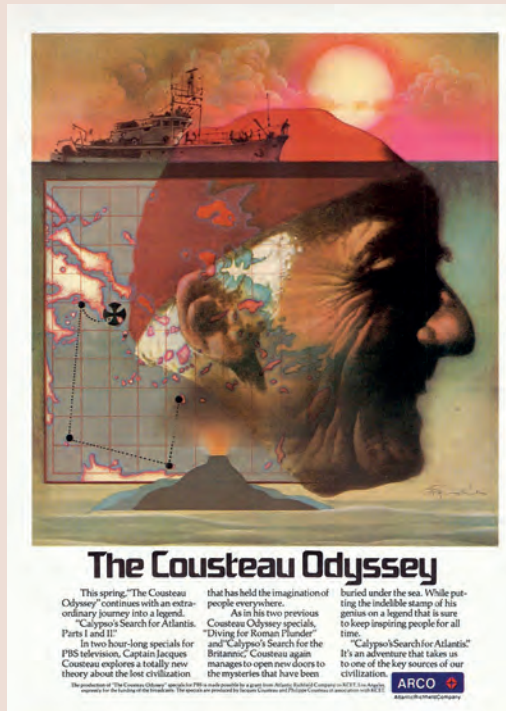
In his epic, Homer makes sure to introduce Odysseus' character as being a patient and enduring sufferer (Lattimore 1965:1.4, 44, 87, 129), but bothers to describe his external characteristics, like the brown colour of his hair (Lattimore 1965:13.399), only when Athena offers to disguise him. Though no ancient author specifies any headgear as Odysseus' genuine attribute, visual art of the early classical period (500-450 BC), like the small Milo relief of *Odysseus and Penelope* at the Louvre, began to depict him often with a *pileus* on his head in order to individualise his artistic representation for posterity. The *pileus* is a common round close-fitting travelling cap in ancient Greece and surrounding regions, subsequently

Anonymous (Greece, Milo, c. 5th BC). *Odysseus and Penelope*, c. 450 BC. Stone, 16 x 19 cm. Paris, FR: Musée du Louvre.



adopted by free men in Rome and later also appropriated by European neoclassicists. It was the brimless version of the *petasus* and could be made of wool or leather. At first this cap, used as inner lining of helmets, was a symbol of fighters. Then it was worn in Greece by voyagers, sailors and craftsmen – especially artists – whose versatility perhaps required them to keep their long and dishevelled hair out of their way. All these groups are connected with Odysseus and just this versatility made the *pileus* a special attribute of his that he, in many respects, ennobled. By this cap Odysseus is signalled as a figure of identification par excellence for all Hellenes and those people who shared their culture (Niederberger 2004:19).

Amongst the latter group of non-Greeks wearing a modern variant of the *pileus* and to a certain degree identifying with Odysseus, it is worth remembering the famous French king of the undersea, Jacques Cousteau (1910-1997) who co-invented the Aqua-Lung breathing device for scuba-diving in 1943 and started the French Navy's undersea research group in 1945. In 1950, Cousteau leased a one-time British minesweeper and converted it into an oceanographic research vessel he named "Calypso". He went on yearly trips on the Calypso to explore the ocean and record his trips on the TV series, *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau*. The Public Broadcasting Service – PBS' television production of *The Cousteau Odyssey* special was intended to open new doors to mysteries that have been buried under the sea – like *Diving for Roman Plunder*, *Calypso's Search for the Britannic* and *Calypso's Search for Atlantis*. The special series' poster in a period magazine represents Cousteau's profile wearing the seaman's red bonnet against a map of the Aegean Sea, joining the sea routes between Sounion Bay, Piraeus, Antikythera, the Gulf of Heraklion and Thera. The map is flanked on its lower part by a representation of Thera's volcanic eruption and on its top by Cousteau's research vessel, Calypso.



Atlantic Richfield Company - ARCO (USA, f. 1966). *The Cousteau Odyssey*, 1978. Poster, 30 x 21. Courtesy of the Public Broadcasting Service - PBS, Arlington, VA.



Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (Germany, 1751-1829). *Homer*, drawn after the Antique. *The Heads of the Seven Main Heroes of the Iliad*, 1801 Göttingen. Etching on paper, 40 x 54. Braunschweig, DE: Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum. | Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (*ib.*). *Odysseus disguised as Shepherd is not detected by his wife Penelope*, 1802. Oil on canvas, 69 x 90. Oldenburg, DE: Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte.

Tischbein's 1801 etching *The Heads of the Seven Main Heroes of the Iliad* represents from left to right Menelaus, Paris, Diomedes, Odysseus, Nestor, Achilles and Agamemnon. All of them are depicted after idealised prototypes with easily identifiable conventional attributes. The head of Odysseus, in the middle, is after a marble sculpture of c. 150 in the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins, which represents him as the king of Ithaca, wearing an exceptionally ornate *pileus*. Therefore, the fact that in his painting of the following year, *Odysseus disguised as Shepherd*, Tischbein represents him wearing a prominent red *skouphos* (cap) suggests that this foreign attribute was introduced to accentuate his concealment. Indeed, the insistence of neoclassical art to represent Odysseus with a *skouphos* seems to underline the fact that his adventurous nature had turned him into a foreigner even for his close relatives, namely Penelope and Telemachus. Thus opens the discourse about the

Phrygian *skouphos*, which is a most recondite antiquarian symbol, originating with the inhabitants of ancient Phrygia, a region of central Anatolia. A particularity of this *skouphos* was that it was conical and its soft tip was pulled forward, as if to express an eager readiness for aggression or action. For the ancient Greeks, the Phrygian *skouphos* indicates non-Hellenic *barbarism*, meaning in the classical sense absence of culture and civilisation. Such foreigners wearing the Phrygian *skouphos* included the Persian god of light, truth and honour, Mithras; the Anatolian consort of Cybele, Attis; and the Oriental deity of fertility, potency and prosperity, Priapus. It further identified the Trojan prince Paris, as Tischbein's etching demonstrates.

Antonio Canova (Italy, 1757-1822). *Statue of Paris*, 1807-1812. Marble, H:207. Saint Petersburg, RU: The State Hermitage Museum.



The handsome prince Paris, who appears in legends related to beauty and love, actually had an unfortunate upbringing. In Euripides' *Andromache*, when Paris was born, his sister "Cassandra shouted her order to kill him, the city of Priam's great ruin!" (Euripides 1995:295). With great sorrow his parents, king Priam and Hecuba, abandoned him in the wilderness. But instead of dying, Paris was suckled by a she-wolf and eventually adopted by shepherds. While he was a young shepherd he was used by the gods in the famous judgment of the goddesses Hera, Athena and Aphrodite, in which he chose the latter, who promised him to have the Beautiful Helen. Soon after, Paris returned to his home city during funeral games and conquered even his heroic brother Hector in the contests. A fight ensued over the prize of a bullock and Paris fled to the Altar of Zeus, where Cassandra recognised him as her brother. He was immediately accepted as the son of king Priam and the curse upon him was forgotten. When Paris and Aeneas set off for Sparta to kidnap Helen, queen of Sparta, Paris' promised prize, Cassandra predicted the doom his voyage would cause. She was ignored, though and Priam refused to pay any attention to this prophecy in this matter (Graves 1955:635). This elopement became the immediate cause of the Trojan War. Later in that war, he managed to fatally wound Achilles in the heel with an arrow, as foretold by Achilles' mother, Thetis. Soon thereafter, came the fall of Troy, in which he perished. Canova received a commission from the Empress Josephine of France to execute a full-length statue of Paris (The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg). It depicts the moment in Greek mythology when Paris, as shepherd, who had been called upon by Zeus to judge who was the most beautiful among the three goddesses, turns to gaze at them. The sculptor exploited the subject to create an ideal head, balancing the pure *skouphos* with the sensuousness of Paris' expression. Canova's friend Antoine Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849), a French neoclassical theorist and critic who greatly influenced his artistic ideals, stated: "There is a mixture of the heroic and the voluptuous, the noble and the amorous" (Cuno 2009:206).



Anonymous (France, c. 18th). *Two Scenes with Balloons - Remembrance of General Charles Victor Meusnier La Place*, 1794. Collage: pen, ink and watercolour, 34 x 44; felt cap, 24 x 31. Vizille, FR: Musée de la Révolution française.

The Phrygian *skouphos* is the ancient predecessor of the *bonnet rouge* (red cap) of the French Revolution, a supple, conical cap with the tip pulled forward adorned with a tri-coloured ribbon cockade. It became the symbol of the movement of the Jacobins, which was the main political force at the time. The emblem's popularity during the revolution is due in part to its confusion with the Roman ritual of manumission of slaves, in which a freed slave received the *pileus* as a symbol of his newfound liberty. Misinterpreted as the *skouphos* of antiquity, the *bonnet rouge* came to signify freedom and the pursuit of liberty associated with the felt cap of emancipated slaves. Such a genuine red liberty cap was combined with a painting commemorating both the glorious death of General Charles Victor Meusnier La Place (1754-1793) of his wounds fighting the Prussians on the Rhine on 13 June 1793 and the famous National Convention of 4 February 1794, which led to the declaration of abolition of slavery in all French colonies. This scholar was the initiator of the use of balloons by the army to observe the enemy. The General's wool cap with tricolour blue-white-red pleated cockade is placed between the two sides of the Atlantic – France and the United States. On either side of the cap's background appear two balloons. In the left one, of Montgolfier design, decorated with a Gorgon, three soldiers send bombs on a French port whose fortifications become unnecessary. In the right one, completely futuristic with helix, the passengers launch a tri-coloured banner inscribed with the "Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen" to a slave, who welcomes with open arms such a sign of progress and freedom. Between the two sides, the red cap is presented to the viewer as a fraternal proposed alliance between the people and

the expression of humanity necessary for the institution of a society that is ideally non-hierarchical, slave-free and righteous. Here, scientific discoveries are put to the proper use of humanity with human rights as dictated by the revolutionary period.

In 1792, after the National Convention of France announced that it had abolished the monarchy, Abbé Grégoire proposed that the Republic's image should be "Liberty, 'so that our emblem, circulating all over the globe, should present to all peoples the beloved image of Republican liberty and pride'" (Agulhon 1981:18). The feminine allegory of the Republic was carefully chosen to symbolise the breaking with the old monarchy headed by kings and promote modern republican ideology. One of the earliest representations of the Republic is found in the sketch of a now lost painting that Antoine-Jean Gros created in 1794 as a crest for the Legation of France in Genoa. She appears on a plain ground as a sturdy young woman with key attributes. The Phrygian *skouphos*, a symbol of liberty, surmounts the spear on her right hand. The level, a symbol of equality, on her left hand crowns a licitor bundle entwined by oak leaves, itself a symbol of union and strength. She is wearing a short tunic, in the style of ancient Greece, leaving her right breast uncovered and her Roman warrior helmet alludes to a nation in arms against the allied monarchies.

Further than just a headgear, the neoclassical Odyssean *skouphos* is also emblematic of the mind's illumination as opposed to its dark blindness. Nikos Kazantzakis' own epic of the *Odyssey* of 1924-1938, subtitled *A Modern Sequel*, opens with the following verses, "O Sun, great Oriental, my proud mind's golden cap, / I love to wear you cocked askew and to burst in song / to rouse our hearts, so long as you and I both live." (Kazantzakis 1958:1.1-3). With this invocation to the sun, Odysseus refers to the centre of the solar system as the precious headdress of his own wit that he chooses to wear off-centre at will. Likewise, the *bonnet rouge* was conceived as emblematic of the source of wisdom that led to liberty. During the French Revolution, the *Conseil de Cinq-Cents* (*Council of Five Hundred*), consisting of 500 delegates who proposed legislation, accessed the respective chamber via an identification medal engraved with the name of its owner. On its obverse the medal was adorned with a Phrygian *skouphos* against a radiant source of light, the *panoptic* (all-seeing) sun.

What is more, in the knowledge that Duchamp was discreetly interested in sexuality, he would have been fascinated with the phallic allusion of the Phrygian *skouphos*, as much in relation to Mithras as to Priapus. In the House of the Vettii's vestibule, Pompeii, over the front door, a mural represents Priapus, standing as guardian. He is depicted wearing a Phrygian *skouphos*, which suggests that he is an Oriental deity. He is also wearing a yellow-blue robe, which he raises with one hand to reveal his main attribute – his oversized organ. The scene shows him holding up with the other hand a pair of scales to weigh against a sack of coins his phallus. It weighs at least as much as the coins, as if to prove that fecundity is worth its weight in gold. His phallus points down to the basket full of fruit, indicating his origin as a god of groves and gardens. Unlike the Greeks, ancient Romans admired the large penis of Priapus, although they had a sense of humour about it. However, originating as the ceremonial head cover of the Mithraic mystery cult, the Phrygian *skouphos* is linked with the rite of circumcision and, indirectly, with the rite of castration, standing for the excised husk of the phallus born aloft as a trophy on the head of the high priest. Therefore, it has been characterised as a "Symbolising Cap ... always sanguine in its colour ... always masculine in its meaning. In its blood red hue, the cap stands for the crown or tip of the phallus, whether human or representative." (Spiegel 2000:117). "The Phrygian bonnet is the ambiguously phallic headgear of the Republic worn, we should remember, by the female figure of Marianne [...] signifying literal or metaphorical castration." (Reader 1994:60-61). It is likely that in Duchamp's mind the price for the French Revolution's well-founded attack on patriarchy was the fall of the phallus as suggested by his readymade cowl.



Antoine-Jean Gros
(France, 1771-1835).
*Allegorical Figure of
the Republic, 1794.*
Oil on canvas, 73 x 61.
Montpellier, FR: Musée Fabre.



Anonymous (France).
*Service Medal of the Council of Five
Hundred assigned to Laurence, c. 1795.*
Cast bronze and ormolu, Ø:6.
Courtesy of Binoche et Giquello,
Paris, FR.

With all the aforementioned multifarious references, *Tiré à quatre épingles* emerges as Duchamp's most evocative work. If he had in mind Odysseus, this work refers to a prop of concealment like in a masquerade. If Paris or any other Phrygian was his intended reference, then it is evocative of exotic Anatolia. In relation to French revolution's *bonnet rouge*, this work is emblematic of the freedom and the pursuit of liberty associated with sailing the seas. On another level connected to language, however, the French idiomatic expression "tiré à quatre épingles", literally translates as "pulled at four pins" that parallels the English equivalent phrase "dressed to the nines", meaning impeccably groomed. This was the title of Pierre de Massot's 1959 book of poems for which Duchamp created a cover. There is no obvious connection between this expression and the resultant readymade tin object. In the knowledge of Duchamp's iconoclasm, however, *Tiré à quatre épingles* seems most likely to be a parody to Homer's description of Paris "beautiful as a God" (Lattimore 1951:3.58).

**Anonymous (Pompeii, c. 1st AD).
Priapus weighing his Phallus,
c. 65-79. Fresco.
Naples, IT: Museo Archeologico
Nazionale di Napoli.**



Duchamp's *Hat Rack* as Emblem of Cuckoldry

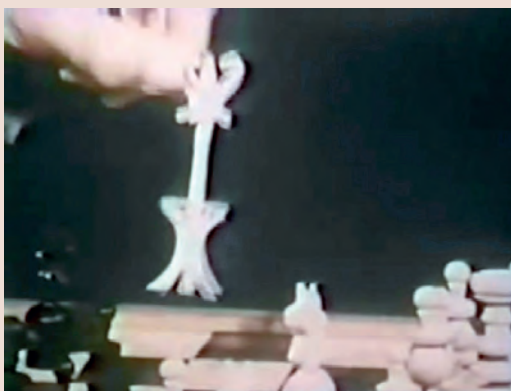
II.9

Duchamp's *Hat Rack* was originally suspended from the ceiling of his New York studio at 33 West 67th Street in 1917 and, like many of the readymades he nominated, contradicts its normal function and is rendered useless. Asked why he occasionally hung works from the ceiling, Duchamp replied that it was to escape the conformity which dictated that works of art should be hung on a wall or presented on an easel (Schwarz 1969:469). Like many of the readymades, the original *Hat Rack* was lost and deemed important enough for a further edition to be reproduced by Galleria Schwarz, Milan, in 1964 under Duchamp's supervision. Apart from exploring the translation of physical displacement into artistic paradox (Judovitz 1995:94), Schwarz claimed that the *Hat Rack* is like the *Bottle Rack*, "reminiscent of the theme of the *Large Glass*... there is a double implication in the fact that the conjunction of the allegorical symbols of male (the spikes/pegs) and female (the bottles/hats) never takes place: in both the readymades, a taboo on sexual relations is indicated and both seem to symbolise Duchamp's Bachelor status" (Schwarz 1969:200-201). Therefore, *Hat Rack* is yet another work essentially exploring the inevitable futility of the sexual act.



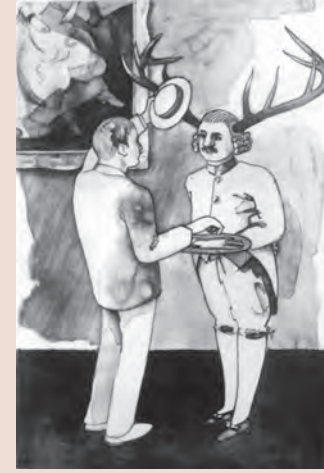
Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Hat Rack, 1917/1964, New York.
Readymade: wood, 23 x 44 x 33.
Replica after lost original.
Paris, FR: Centre Pompidou, Musée
National d'Art Moderne.

Hans Richter's *8 x 8: A Film Sonata in 8 Movements* concerned eight short artistic visions based around the game of chess. It opened in New York at the Fifth Avenue Cinema in 1957 after a compromise with the New York State Censor Board. The license to show the film was granted "on the condition that a nude in the background of two sequences be shown on the screen out of focus" (*Censors License "8 x 8"*, Box Office, 16 March 1957, E-1). The sixth of its eight movements was *The Self-Imposed Obstacle*. This is a psychoanalytic sequence in which a man (Willem de Vogel) playing chess by himself is prevented from moving his black knight to complete the perfect move by his obsession with the white king in the form of a classic coat rack. By the time he is finally able to clear the board of that king, a new obstacle appears, namely, the visage of a blurry nude woman in the background.



Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
The Self-Imposed Obstacle
in *8 x 8: A Film Sonata in 8*
Movements, 1956-1957.
Film, 01:38:00.
Courtesy of Hans Richter Estate,
West Palm Beach, FL.

He imagines the pawn/rack turning into a real utensil of the background, on which the nude woman hangs her clothes before she vanishes in the distance. According to the *New York Times*, Richter viewed "life itself is a comparable game played out consciously and subconsciously" (H.H.T. 1957:16). More importantly, this film seems to reveal Duchamp's widespread influence, further than his protagonist role as black king in the second movement. The white hat rack is clearly identified with a white king and its phallic morphic pegs therefore suggest the tips of the royal crown.



Joseph Strick (USA, 1923-2010). Still from the *Circe Episode* in *Ulysses*, 1967. Film drama, 01:12:00. London, UK: British Lion Films. | Richard Hamilton (England, 1922-2011). *Madame Tweedy is in her bath, sir*, 1949/1989. Heliogravure, aquatint and burin on paper, 33 x 25. London, UK: Waddington Graphics.

Perhaps more light is thrown on the role and meaning of Duchamp's *Hat Rack* by the symbolic usage of such utensil in Joyce's *Ulysses*. In the *Circe* episode, Bloom is suddenly transformed into a flunkey sprouting antler horns at his own cuckoldry in Bella Cohen's brothel in Dublin's Nighttown. Bloom's hallucination of Boylan's avatar appearing in this brothel is evocative of the fact that the latter is cuckolding him: "(He hangs his hat smartly on a peg of Bloom's antlered head) Show me in. I have a little private business with your wife, you understand?" (Joyce 1934:15.551). Both Joseph Strick and Richard Hamilton represented this significant episode in their work. Bloom begins imagining that he is making an agreement with Boylan to watching him make unbridled love to Molly – "(To Bloom, over his shoulder.) You can apply your eye to the keyhole and play with yourself while I just go through her a few times." (Joyce 1934:15.552).

The theme of cuckoldry is widespread in the Homeric epics. The Trojan War was caused by Helen's infidelity to her husband Menelaus. The central theme of the *Iliad* is Achilles' wrath at Agamemnon's attack on his personal honour, as the latter took Briseis from him. While Agamemnon is promiscuous in Troy, his wife Clymenestra began a love affair with Aegisthus, his cousin and with this new lover plots to kill her husband upon his glorious return. Odysseus himself has extramarital affairs – a short one with Circe and another, seven years long, with Calypso. Retrospectively recalling both cases before Alcinoos, Odysseus claimed being respectful of his marriage, but was "kept with [Calypso]" (Lattimore 1965:9.29) and "detained [by Circe]" (*ib.* 1965:9.31) because they desired him for their husband. While fidelity is actually glorified by Penelope, a cousin of both adulterers, Helen and Clymenestra, even the gods instance infidelity.

While Alcinoos receives Odysseus as a guest, the blind bard Demodocos sings to the Phaeacian court the marital conflict between Hephaestus and Aphrodite (*ib.* 1965:8.265-366). By her very nature, she was unable to maintain fidelity to her marriage and took advantage of Hephaestus' long workdays to take a lover in Ares. Helios revealed her infidelity to Hephaestus, who "went on his way to his smithy,

heart turbulent with hard sorrows, / and set the great anvil upon its stand and hammered out fastenings / that could not be slipped or broken, to hold them fixed in position" (*ib.* 1965:8.273-275). Daumier chose to represent that moment when Ares and Aphrodite found themselves ensnared under the fastening, while Hephaestus invited the gods to observe the dishonour done to him. The plate is accompanied by the following caption: "In this erotic snare / Seeing these lovers, all the gods were taken / By that famous Homeric laughter, / Reserved since that time for unfortunate husbands – Familiar quatrain by Mr A***..." Homer was sure to give the gods similar attributes to the people, even regarding sexuality as the low expression of the body's need. Therefore, with the myth of Hephaestus and Aphrodite he makes the point that everyone is potentially subject to infidelity and even the gods can offend the treasured value of fidelity. This concept is introduced with the view to pose Penelope as an exemplar of connubial fidelity and virtue. The contrast between Hephaestus and Aphrodite is meant as a foreshadowing to Odysseus' return. The implication is that while he is away, his wife, like Aphrodite, will take another lover. Indeed, Odysseus is aware of the suitors vying for her hand. Furthermore, the implication is that Odysseus will return home broken from his travels, weary and exhausted, whereas Penelope will have taken a young, strong man as her husband. Until Odysseus discovers the fact of his wife's loyalty, the suspicion that he is cuckolded hangs in the air, like Duchamp's *Hat Rack*.

Honoré Daumier
(France, 1808-1879).
*Ancient History - Plate 38:
Ares and Aphrodite*,
Le Charivari, 27/12/1842.
Lithograph on paper, 24 x 20.
Paris, FR: Bibliothèque Nationale
de France.



Duchamp's *Knight as the Wooden Horse*

II.10

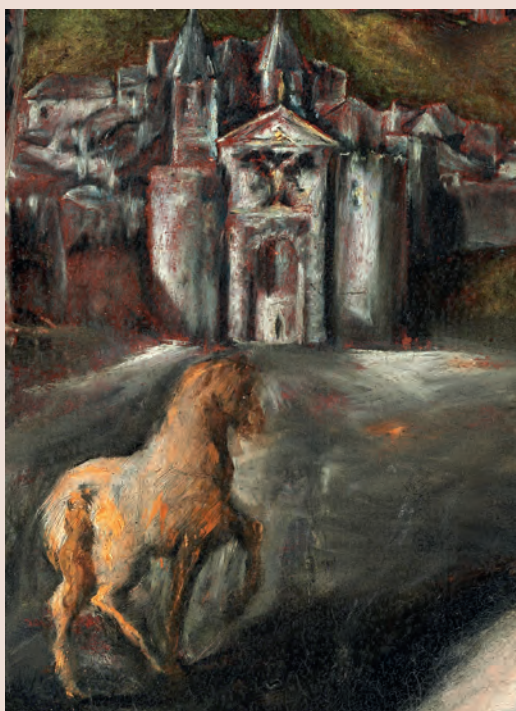
Dante's epic poem *The Divine Comedy* is an allegory representing the journey of the soul through the Underworld towards God, guided by the Roman poet Virgil. *Hell*, the first of its three parts, including *Purgatory* and *Paradise*, is depicted as nine circles of suffering located within the Earth. The last two circles of *Hell* punish sins that involve conscious fraud or treachery. Two cantos are devoted to fraudulent advisers or evil counsellors, who are concealed within individual flames. These are people who used their position to advise others to engage in fraud. In Canto XXVI, Odysseus is condemned to the eighth circle of false counsellors for misusing his gift of reason. He is condemned here for the deception of the *Wooden Horse*. But what is this ruse's evil significance?

The *Wooden Horse* (*Doureios Hippos* in Greek; see Lattimore 1965:4.272; 8.492-493) is part of the myth of the Trojan War. As Homer's *Iliad* ends with the truce between Greeks and Trojans, before the definitive destruction of Troy, it is mentioned as a flashback in the *Odyssey*. However, the main ancient source for this story is the *Aeneid* of Virgil. The Greek siege of Troy had lasted for ten years. In the final year, Athena inspired Odysseus to commission Epeius to craft a gigantic hollow wooden horse – the horse being the emblem of Troy – as a ruse that concealed an elite force of some 30 men inside and fool the Trojans into wheeling it into their city as a trophy. It was allegedly built with Athena's aid within three days. An inscription was engraved on the horse reading, "For their return home, the Greeks dedicate this thankoffering to Athena" (Apollodorus 1921:E.v.15). The rest of the Greek army pretended to sail away whilst it actually hid their fleet behind Tenedos Island, waiting for a signal. Sinon, a Greek spy instructed by Odysseus, was intentionally left behind to ensure the Trojans were deceived and to signal to the Greeks by lighting a beacon. Faced with the Trojans, Sinon claimed that the Greeks abandoned him and that the *Horse* is an offering to the goddess Athena, meant to atone for the previous desecration of her temple at Troy by the Greeks and ensure a safe journey home for the Greek fleet. He also told the Trojans that it was built to be too large for them to take it into their city and gain the favour of Athena for themselves. Despite the warnings of Laocoön and Cassandra, Helen and Deiphobus investigated the *Horse* and the Trojans finally accepted it as a peace offering, even demolishing the lintel of the Scaean Gates to bring it in (see Plautus' *Bacchides* 955). The Trojans celebrated the raising of the siege profusely with wine and when the Greeks emerged from the *Horse* the city was in a drunken stupor. The Greek warriors opened the city gates to allow the rest of the army access and the city was ruthlessly pillaged – all the men were killed and all the women and children taken into slavery.

The Mykonos funerary urn from the Archaic period, is the earliest dated object that represents the *Wooden Horse*. On the neck of the huge vessel appears in relief what the potter thought that statue looked like – the anatomical details of the head, ears, eye, nose, mane, body, tail and four legs of the *Horse* are clearly visible. However, its four hooves are on wheels. The *Horse's* body also bears seven windows that expose the



Anonymous (Mykonos, c. 7th BC).
Detail of *The Wooden Horse of Troy*,
c. 675 BC.
Relief pithos, H:150.
Mykonos, GR: Archaeological
Museum.



Doménikos Theotokópoulos
(Venetian Greece, 1541-1614).
Detail from *Laocoön*, c. 1610.
Oil on canvas, 138 x 173.
Washington, DC: National Gallery
of Art.

heads of Greek warriors hiding inside it, several of whom stick their arms out holding various weapons. In addition, an equal number of standing Greeks with helmets, shields and spears have come out of the *Horse* to sack Troy.

As it is known, Duchamp had admired Doménikos Theotokópoulos' *Laocoön* painting at the Munich Pinakothek in 1912 (see pp 49-51). Besides representing the myth in a critical way that evades classicism, he would likely appreciate the anachronism of the ochre-coloured *Wooden Horse* appearing to gallop towards the Puerta de Bisagra Nueva of Toledo, as if it were the entranceway to Troy. That was by all means a strategic move rather than an innocent one. The *Wooden Horse* was essentially a stratagem used to outwit the opponent and achieve a victorious end. Apparently, after a fruitless 10-year siege, it was the only means by which the stronghold of Troy could fall. Based on the mythological episode, the term 'Wooden Horse of Troy' means



Raymond Duchamp-Villon
(France, 1876-1918).
The Horse, 1914.
Plaster, 45 x 24 x 40.
Grenoble, FR: Musée de Grenoble.

a supposed talent or apparent advantage that is actually a curse – a “hollow ambush” (Lattimore 1965:4.277) that would in today’s terms be a bomb in disguise. The term can also refer to a sneak attack in general. The Latin phrase “*equo ne credite, Teucri! / Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*” (don’t trust the horse, Trojans! / Whatever it is, I fear Greeks even when they are bringing gifts) spoken by Laocoön in the *Aeneid*’s narration of the siege of Troy (Virgil 2006:II.49). This led to the proverb “Beware of Greeks bearing gifts”. The ambiguity of a gift actually serving as a trap would have appealed to Duchamp and was also noted by Joyce (Borach 1979:69f). The *Wooden Horse*’s counterpart in *Ulysses* is the dark horse tipped by Bloom for the races (Ellmann 1959:360).

Of course, the physical horse in life and culture in the period from the beginning of the Bronze Age 3000 BC to the advent of the Machine Age in the late 19th century was man’s closest ally. Horses were completely domesticated and played a significant role within human culture for agriculture, sports, transportation and warfare. Artists often represented the horse for its beauty, power and grace. The end of man’s close relationship to it is eloquently reflected especially in Raymond Duchamp-Villon’s *Horse* sculpture. Being an expert horse rider, he served as a medical non-commissioned officer in the 11th Regiment of Cuirassiers, a cavalry unit, during the Great War. Duchamp-Villon’s *The Horse* evokes the cheerful and eager optimism with which his generation opted for the beauty and dynamism of modern life and the Machine Age. Though being at the other end of naturalism, this sculpture represents a horse with rider rearing up only moments before a leap. Judging by preliminary models, the horse’s forelegs are based on pistons and its shoulders on wheels. This animal then, has been transformed into a machine. In art history, *The Horse* is the first successful fusion of mechanical and organic movement. The spherical, cylindrical and conical sections that make up its entire body bring to mind connecting rods, pulleys and axles, which are arranged on the basis of a functional analysis of horse riding. Apart from that, its abstract composition demonstrates both Bergson’s *simultaneity* and Apollinaire’s *fourth dimension*. As such, *The Horse* is the most profound embodiment of the transition from the old to the new, a symbol of revolution in progress, the embodiment of horsepower (Hamilton and Agee 1967:89).

The Great War saw definitive changes in the use of cavalry. Mechanisation in the war largely replaced the horse as a weapon. The mode of military action changed and the use of trench warfare, barbed wire and machine guns rendered traditional cavalry almost obsolete. Tanks, introduced in 1917, began to take over the role of shock combat. This new affair originated with the Holt Tractors, a range of gasoline-powered continuous track haulers built by the American Holt Manufacturing Company, named after Benjamin Holt, who patented the first workable crawler tractor design. The original 75 model was created in 1904 to be used for ploughing the land. In January 1914 appeared the advanced 120 model, which the American, British and French armies commissioned from Holt, for hauling heavy artillery in the First World War. This tractor acted as a catalyst for the design of what became known as the tank. British Colonel Ernest Dunlop Swinton was instrumental for armour plating its machines and adding weapons on it, so that the Holt Tractor could breach the great obstacles of no-man’s land and break the stalemate of trench warfare. The significant role the tank played in the war is attested by the fact that Colonel Dunlop Swinton publicly honoured Benjamin Holt for his contribution to the war in Stockton, California, on 22 April 1918.

Though it has not explicitly been related so, Duchamp-Villon’s *Horse*-and-rider seems to prophetically refer to the role of the manned tank in the Great War, which rendered heroism obsolete and ushered a new ethic

of combat. This invention is the 20th century's equivalent to the *Wooden Horse* – the subterfuge that revolutionised warfare. In a simile, Homer compared the “fast-running ships, which serve as horses / for men on the salt sea and they cross the expanses of water” (Lattimore 1965:4.708-709). Such a technology – Germany only belatedly followed the Allies' lead – along with communication supremacy and trustworthy command decisions gave the Allies the prerogative to defeat Germany in the lengthy war.

Work on *The Horse* was begun in the spring of 1914 and its final version, in progress when the war was declared to France on 3 August, was finished in the fall when Duchamp-Villon returned to Puteaux on leave. The artist had expressed a wish to enlarge the sculpture, but the war ended his plans since he contracted typhoid fever at the front late in 1916 and grew progressively weaker until he died on 7 October 1918, a month before the Armistice. The sad news reached Marcel by transatlantic cable from his sister Suzanne, while he was in Buenos Aires (Tomkins 1996:208). A first enlargement was carried out under Jacques Villon's direction in 1930. Marcel, who thought this work is “one of the landmarks of the cubist movement” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:148), realised in 1966 with the help of the sculptor Èmile Gilioli a monumental version three times larger (150 cm high) than the original. He renamed it *Le Cheval Majeur* (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen), which in French appropriately echoes *cheval-vapeur* (horsepower).

The link of chess with the Trojan War is evidenced by the typical tactic known as ‘Greek gift sacrifice’, alluding to the *Wooden Horse* and concerning the surrender of a bishop in the hope of gaining positional compensation (Fadul 2008:30-31). Duchamp learned to play chess in 1902 at the age of thirteen (Schonberg 1963:20). From that point onwards, the pattern of his life's development resembles the move-by-move sequence of a chess game (Naumann, Bailey and Shahade 2009:1). His opponent may be considered to be the entire history of Western art (*ib.* 2009:2), to which he unarguably administered checkmate. Duchamp, for whom repetition was anathema, must have delighted in the fact that the number of possible variations in a game is so vast as to be virtually incalculable (*ib.* 2009:24). He used the theme of chess as points of departure for his works, at first explicitly and on the way more implicitly. His obsession with chess over any other creative activity is reflected in his letter of 3 May 1919, which he wrote to the Stettheimers from Buenos Aires, “I play [chess] night and day and nothing in the whole world interests me more than finding the right move” (Naumann and Obalk 2000:82). While there, he designed a set of wooden chess pieces. The design for the *Knight* calls for special attention because it is representational, while that of the other chess pieces is abstract. It represents the horse bust gracefully sinking the head to its breast. Viewed from the side, the compact design is echoed by a stylised spiral, like Jarry's *gidouille* (fat belly), the whirlpool into which any enemy is liable to vanish. Its coifed mane appears punctuated by an even repetition of small rectangles, like the ramparts of a tower. Unlike the other chess pieces, which are turned on a lathe, this one is invested with considerable naturalness. However, its metal base oddly contrasts with the upper part, while accentuating its contrivance, which gives it a complementary sense of artificiality. This balance of naturalism and artifice was shared by the *Wooden Horse*. More pertinent to the game of chess, the knight (♘♙) is a piece in the form of a horse's bust, representing armoured cavalry. The knight's move is unusual among chess pieces. It can move to a square that is two squares horizontally and one square vertically, or two squares vertically and one square horizontally. The complete move therefore looks like the letter ‘L’. Unlike all other standard chess pieces, the knight can jump over all other pieces on its way and capture the piece on its destination square. These rather unorthodox methods of movement recall the deceptive quality of the *Wooden Horse*. For Virgil it was completely sinister, without pedigree, appearing from nowhere (Fields 2004:51). For Duchamp it was a role model in administering a lasting blow to Western art history.



Anonymous (USA). British Colonel Ernest Dunlop Swinton publicly honours Benjamin Holt's contribution to World War I in Stockton, California, on 22 April 1918, with a Holt Tractor (right) and a model of a British Tank (left).



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Knight, 1918, Buenos Aires. Wood and metal, H:7. Villiers-sous-Grez, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives.

Of grave significance is the Homeric trace in Duchamp's decision to carve all his chess pieces by himself, except for the *Knights*, which were executed by a local craftsman based on his design (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:288). Such an inconsistent tactic seems to have been informed by Homer's description



Giandomenico Tiepolo (Venice, 1727-1804). *The Building of the Trojan Horse*, 1760. Oil on canvas, 193 x 360. Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Athenaeum.

in the *Odyssey*, “sing us / the wooden horse, which Epeius made with Athena helping, / the stratagem great Odysseus filled once with men and brought it / to the upper city and it was these men who sacked Iliion.” (Lattimore 1965:8.492-495). Epeius of Phocis, who proclaims himself champion in boxing, yet admits being deficient in warfare (Lattimore 1951:23.670) and evokes laughter upon attempting the discus (*ib.* 1951:23.840), came down history as the architect of excellent technical knowledge who built one of the rarest challenges of history – the *Wooden Horse* of Troy. According to Homer, it was Odysseus who conceived of the stratagem and Epeius who materialised it. This fact is attested in the monumental picture by Giandomenico Tiepolo depicting the building of the *Trojan Horse* on the beach outside Troy. It seems to be a perfect allegory for Tiepolo's own activity, the composition of this gigantic painting. Both the horse and the painting have a powerful secret hidden inside – for the former it is an army, while for the latter it is an allegory. Two interlocutors on the other side of a dried riverbank direct the hive of activity – Odysseus pointing out qualities of his idea to king Agamemnon who listens to him one step behind and wrapped in his coat. This group, dressed as classical philosophers, represents the artistic intellect required to compose the painting. The main motif, the building of the giant wooden horse, comprising all sorts of manual artisans led by Epeius, who may be represented as a shadowy figure in the distance, appears separately in the foreground to emphasise its independence, in another reality. Tiepolo composed his picture on the basis of the artist as intellectual on one side and the artist as craftsmen on the other struggling as artists always do, with the help of assistants, to complete his picture.

This differentiation of inspirer and maker is all-important and serves to accentuate the value of the *idea* over its fabrication. On many an occasion the inspirer does not have the time or capacity to materialise his idea, a factor that obliges him to turn to the maker. Of course Duchamp took this practicality to an extreme when, while still in Buenos Aires, soon after commissioning the making of his *Knight* pieces, he sent his sister in Paris a wedding gift with instructions to make *Unhappy Readymade*, “It was a geometry book, which he [the husband] had hang by strings on the balcony of his apartment in the Rue Condamine; the wind had to go through the book, choose its own problems, turn and tear out the pages.” (Cabanne 1971:61). Sol LeWitt, a Duchampian follower, who often hired specialists to execute his written instructions for works of art, even further developed the concept that the idea actually *is* the work. Of importance, however, is that the first documented inspirer to apply the concept of receiving credit of the idea is the Homeric Odysseus. Duchamp went to such great lengths to identify with the knight. This fact is attested by Hans Richter's *8 x 8: A Film Sonata in 8 Movements* of 1956-1957, which viewed “life itself is a comparable game played out consciously and subconsciously” (H.H.T. 1957:16). In the movement *Black Schemes*, Jacqueline

Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Unhappy Readymade, 1918,
Buenos Aires.
Original destroyed
(dimensions not recorded).
From *Box in a Valise*.



Matisse-Monnier (stepdaughter of Duchamp) plays a white queen, while Duchamp plays a black knight. In the film they shoot one another with a bow and arrow. After receiving each other's blows – the former at the neck, the latter at the breast – the queen bends over the enemy knight to kiss him. For Duchamp, the adulterous knight and queen relation was an early obsession. In a June 1919 letter to Walter Arensberg he wrote, "I find all around me transformed into knight or queen and the outside world holds no other interest to me than in its transposition into winning or losing scenarios." (Naumann and Obalk 2000:86). Incidentally, the Cuban chess player José Raúl Capablanca (1888-1942), world chess champion from 1921 to 1927 that Duchamp studied (Naumann, Bailey and Shahade 2009:13), considered the knight and queen to be an ideal combination, while the knight may play a prominent part as an attacking force (see Capablanca. *Chess Fundamentals*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1921).

Duchamp's whole life was something of a "knight's tour" (Mundy 2008:140). Naumann pondered that "Duchamp may have felt that the erratic movement of this piece reflected his peripatetic lifestyle" (*ib.* 2008:66). In the spring of 1967, Alfred Wolkenberg, owner of Editions Les Maitres, issued *Marcel Duchamp*



Hans Richter (Germany, 1888-1976). *Black Schemes in 8 x 8: A Film Sonata in 8 Movements*, 1956-1957. Film, 01:38:00. Courtesy of Hans Richter Estate, West Palm Beach, FL.

Cast Alive, which is composed of a life-cast of the artist's face and right forearm. The mask resting on the arm's hand peers over a segment of three zones of a chessboard on which rests only one knight, cast from the Buenos Aires chess set. Duchamp thought that the knight represents all the other playing pieces (Naumann 1999:272). The fact that out of all his pieces he singled out the knight attests to the value it held for him – likely that of a soul mate and an accomplice helping him to administer checkmate on art.

When the rumour circulated through the art world in the early 1920s that Duchamp decided to give up making art in order to devote his life to playing chess, that was the stage in his career when he put his own 'Wooden Horse' to effect. He carried on the game underground and no aesthetic rival – Naumann mentions Picasso (Naumann, Bailey and Shahade 2009:2) – could rise to challenge him. Especially after he died, Duchamp emerged victorious. In retrospect, he is acknowledged to fuse his identity as artist with that of a chess player – "all chess players are artists", he claimed (quoted in *Ephemerides*, entry for 30/8/1952). That was his ruse to Western art history – to promote conceptual works that are akin to the game of chess. Considering the fact that Duchamp caused such a lasting blow to the institution of art, his pivotal role may well be compared to the *Wooden Horse* of Troy.



Alfred Wolkenberg (USA, 1911-1990). *Marcel Duchamp Cast Alive*, 1967. Assemblage: bronze cast and segment of chessboard of onyx and black Belgian marble, 55 x 43 x 24 New York, NY: Private Collection.

Fountain by R. Mutt

Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz



THE EXHIBIT REFUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS

THE BLIND MAN

The Richard Mutt Case

They say any artist paying
six dollars may exhibit.

Mr. Richard Mutt sent in a
fountain. Without discussion
this article disappeared and
never was exhibited.

What were the grounds for refusing
Mr. Mutt's fountain:—

1. Some contended it was immoral, vulgar.
2. Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.

Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not
immoral, that is absurd, no more than
a bath tub is immoral. It is a fixture that
you see every day in plumbers' show windows.

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands
made the fountain or not has no importance.
He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article
of life, placed it so that its useful significance
disappeared under the new title and point of
view—created a new thought for that object.

As for plumbing, that is absurd.
The only works of art America
has given are her plumbing and
her bridges.

"Buddha of the Bathroom"

I suppose monkeys hated to lose their
tail. Necessary, useful and an ornament,
monkey imagination could not stretch to a
tailless existence (and frankly, do you see
the biological beauty of our loss of them?),
yet now that we are used to it, we get on
pretty well without them. But evolution
is not pleasing to the monkey race; "there
is a death in every change" and we monkeys
do not love death as we should. We are
like those philosophers whom Dante placed
in his Inferno with their heads set the
wrong way on their shoulders. We walk
forward looking backward, each with more
of his predecessors' personality than his
own. Our eyes are not ours.

The ideas that our ancestors have joined
together let no man put asunder! In *La
Dissociation des Idées*, Remy de Gourmont,
quietly analytic, shows how sacred is
the marriage of ideas. At least one charm-

ing thing about our human institution is
that although a man marry he can never
be *only* a husband. Besides being a money-
making device and the *one* man that *one*
woman can sleep with in legal purity with-
out sin he may even be as well some other
woman's very personification of her ab-
stract idea. Sin, while to his employees he
is nothing but their "Boss," to his children
only their "Father," and to himself cer-
tainly something more complex.

But with objects and ideas it is different.
Recently we have had a chance to observe
their meticulous monogamy.

When the jurors of *The Society of In-
dependent Artists* fairly rushed to remove
the bit of sculpture called the *Fountain*
sent in by Richard Mutt, because the object
was irrevocably associated in their atavistic
minds with a certain natural function of a
secretive sort. Yet to any "innocent" eye

Marcel Duchamp, Beatrice Wood and
Henri-Pierre Roché (eds).
Pages 4 and 5 of *The Blind Man*,
No. 2, May 1917.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art.

Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* of 1917, bearing a pseudonymous signature, became Duchamp's most celebrated readymade because of the notoriety its rejection had caused ever since it emerged. The whole point about it is the pseudonym "R. Mutt", which the author inscribed in black paint both roughly and prominently. Because of its obvious association to Mott Works, Duchamp aimed to disorientate the viewers, "I altered it to Mutt, after the daily cartoon strip 'Mutt and Jeff' [...] And I added *Richard* (French slang for moneybags) [...] The opposite of poverty." (Hahn 1966:10). However, this all-important pseudonym happens to be a witty pun, comparable to Odysseus' punning allonym *ou tis* (Lattimore 1965:9.366), due to its rich openness of meaning – as *art mute* it means an artefact that is stupid or incompetent because it cannot speak; as *Armut* it means poverty in German referring to its poor materials; most likely as *roi mat* (French for checkmate) it suggests its victory over the whole game of art.

One way or another, the *Fountain's* story is known, though the original's whereabouts are not. It was submitted to the first exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists at the Grand Central Palace on West 35th Street, New York. According to newspaper accounts, on the eve of the exhibition, 8 April 1917, a slight majority of its directors voted against its inclusion on the grounds of immorality, vulgarity, even plagiarism (Schwarz 1969:650). Subsequently it was removed from sight until 13 April, when Duchamp and Beatrice Wood took it to Alfred Stieglitz to photograph it for the second issue of *The Blind Man* in May. It was photographed some time between 13 and 19 April, when Stieglitz wrote to the critic Henry McBride, inviting him to 291 to see both the photograph and the *Fountain* itself. Subsequently, the notorious *Fountain* made a flamboyant disappearance that turned it into a legend. So, Stieglitz's photograph remains the only accurate record of the original object. Its portrait photograph appeared cropped as square on page 4, followed by Wood's text "The Richard Mutt Case", the first public statement about the concept of the readymade and Louise Norton's text "Buddha of the Bathroom", a hymn about this object's aesthetic appeal with a timeless quality like a religious relic.

The *Fountain's* rejection was rather the big deal about it. There ensued a huge argument that could by no means be won at the time, though the actual winner, for posterity, was the legend about it. The fuss that it caused is eloquently described in Wood's 1985 autobiography *I Shock Myself* as follows: "The rejection of R. Mutt's *Fountain* had caused a small hurricane of controversy in art circles and thus unfurled the banner of freedom in art" (Ades 2013:165). Such a description brings to mind the kind of bomb that the



Isaac Moillon (France, 1614-1673).
Aeolus offering the Winds to Odysseus, c. 1650.
 Oil on canvas, 66 x 66.
 Le Mans, FR: Musée de Tessé.

Bag of Winds had represented in the *Odyssey*, as Isaac Moillon pictured it in the centre of his square composition in *Aeolus offering the Winds to Odysseus* of c. 1650. Aeolus kindly handed to the ship's captain a bag containing all of the winds, of which the westerly one would guide him and his crew home. This generous gift was treated with suspicion by Odysseus' companions' own folly when Ithaca was in sight. While Odysseus fell asleep, confident their adventure was coming to a close, his companions suspected the tightly tied bag to contain riches. Out of their own folly, "they opened the bag and the winds all burst out. Suddenly / the storm caught them away from their own country. Then I waking / pondered deeply in my own blameless spirit, whether / to throw myself over the side and die in the open water, / or wait it out in silence and still be one of the living; / and I endured it and waited and hiding my face I lay down / in the ship, while all were carried on the evil blast of the stormwind / back to the Aeolian island, with my friends grieving." (Lattimore 1965:10.47-55).

It may be impossible to ascertain whether Duchamp conceived of his *Fountain* with the unleashing of winds in mind, but its aftermath, which he masterfully prearranged or directed along the way, had a similar effect. According to Professor Dawn Ades, it is reasonable to assume that Duchamp's ideas about the *Fountain* and all that it represented were familiar to the small group of his immediate circle, especially Roché and Wood. Both Arensberg and Wood were privy to him in the run up to the scandal and the Richard Mutt plot was more of a collective than is admitted (Ades 2013:12). The fact of the matter is that Duchamp's *Fountain* became so emblematic of new art that the vanished original was duly reproduced as many as fifteen times!

Corresponding to the *Odyssey's* Book 10 is Joyce's *Aeolus* episode in *Ulysses*, in which Bloom was challenged to promote the advertisement for the merchant Alexander Keyes to the *Freeman's Journal*. Within sight of his aim, Bloom was foiled in his attempt by the inflexibly demanding Keyes and irritated drunk editor Myles Crawford. The great irony of this mess is that the true hope of Ireland, that is Bloom – a man of decency, understanding and charity – was rejected, while the leaders of Dublin – a professor and a newspaper editor – embarked upon a quest that cannot be brought to a meaningful or successful completion, comparable to the pursuit of chimeras. Ironically, Keyes' ad crowned by two crossed keys suggests the keyless plight of the two protagonists of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Likewise, Duchamp's *Fountain* has led the history of art in such hopeless perplexity.

II.12

Duchamp's *Bilboquet* as *Nausicaä* throwing the Ball

John Flaxman (England, 1755-1826).
*The Odyssey of Homer, Plate X:
 Nausicaä Throwing the Ball, 1805.*
 Etching on paper, 17 x 29.
 London, UK: Tate Gallery.



Nico Hadjikyriaco Ghika
 (Greece, 1906-1994). *Nausicaä*, 1948.
 Bronze, 39 x 16 x 24.
 Athens, GR: Benaki Museum -
 Ghika Gallery.

In Book 6 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus was shipwrecked on the coast of the island of Scheria. Athena inspired the king's daughter, Nausicaä, with the idea to go along with her attendants to the river's delta nearby the seashore, not far away from where Odysseus' ship had sunk, to wash clothes. Once the work was finished, they all threw off their veils for a game of ball. Then, under Athena's mediation, Nausicaä threw the ball just when the group was about to start on the way home. Ghika chose to capture this crucial moment, making the ball appear like a planet in orbit around her body, traversing her womb (Rogakos 2006:22). John Flaxman represented, amidst the distressed expressions of her attendants, the position of Nausicaä's body, shadowed by Athena, suggesting that they are throwing the ball together so to make it fly far and true to its aim – near where Odysseus lay. "Now the princess threw the ball toward one handmaiden, / and missed the girl and the ball went into the swirling water and they all cried aloud and noble Odysseus wakened" (Lattimore 1965:6.115-117). Odysseus heard the outcry of young women, which made him wonder aloud if they were nymphs or human people he could converse with. "So speaking, great Odysseus came from under his thicket, / and from the dense foliage with his heavy hand he broke off / a leafy branch to cover his body and hide the male parts / and went in the confidence of his strength, like some hill-kept lion" (*ib.* 1965:6.127-130). Thus, the hero was ready to face young girls, despite his naked, dirty and hungry state. The painting of Jean Veber faithfully represents the moment when the emergence of Odysseus causes the handmaidens to scatter in horror at his sight, while Athena "put courage into [Nausicaä's] heart and took the fear from her body and she stood her ground and faced him" (*ib.* 1965:6.140). The ball is prominently positioned at one angle of an equilateral triangle that is completed by the crouching body of Odysseus. This scene is rather descriptive of epiphany when the virgin eyes of a princess lose their virginity. Of course, Homer makes sure to inform his



readers that Odysseus' behaviour was civil in every respect. When the train provided him with the essentials for a bath, he said, "But I will not bathe in front of you, for I feel embarrassed / in the presence of lovely-haired girls to appear all naked" (*ib.* 1965:6.221-222).

The erotic connotation of the above scene cannot be overstated. Nausicaä is young and very pretty; Odysseus said that she resembled a goddess, particularly

Jean Veber
 (France, 1864-1928).
Odysseus and Nausicaä, 1888.
 Oil on canvas, 80 x 100.
 Paris, FR: École Nationale
 Supérieure des Beaux-Arts.

Artemis (*ib.* 1965:6.151). Homer gave a literary account of love never hitherto expressed, possibly one of the earliest examples of unrequited love in literature (*ib.* 1965:6.149-185). Despite being presented as a potential love interest to Odysseus – she informs her retinue that she would like her husband to be like him (*ib.* 1965:6.244) and her father tells Odysseus he would let him marry her (*ib.* 1965:7.313) – nothing would result between the pair. Furthermore, Nausicaä is a mother figure for Odysseus; she ensures his return home and thus says “think of me sometimes when you are / back at home, how I was the first you owed your life to” (*ib.* 1965:8.461-462), indicating her status as a new mother in Odysseus’ rebirth. Interestingly, Odysseus never tells Penelope about his encounter with Nausicaä, out of all the women he met on his long journey home. Some suggest this indicates a deeper level of feeling for the girl (Powell 1995:581). Although Homer treated the story as circumstantial of unconsummated love, the visual encounter of a king stripped bare from clothes and a princess ready to be married creates by definition a field of sexual tension.

The first encounter of Odysseus and Nausicaä, identifying the male anatomy with a protruding phallus and the female’s womb with the smooth spherical surface of the ball, extends to evoke the sexual ramifications of the *Bilboquet* (*Ball-Catcher*). This is a game whose origins are somewhat obscure, but is recorded to have been popular in France as early as the 16th century (Slocum and Botermans 1986:142). Its French name is composite, deriving from *bille*, the word for ball and *boquet*, which means the point of a spear. Made of wood, the solid ball is drilled with a thumb-sized hole and attached by string to the decoratively turned handle fashioned with a cup on one end to receive the ball and a spike on the other to impale the ball’s hole. *Bilboquet* is a game of dexterity; the object is for a player to throw up the ball in the air with one hand and hold the stick in the other hand either to receive the ball on the cup or pierce it through the stick, which requires practice and patience to master. This game’s allusion to sexuality is indisputable, as evidenced by A. H. Katz’s 1914 postcard *The Love Game*:

The Bilboquet, which quotes the man to boast to his female flirt, “You see! Nothing easier than this: One simply has to insert the handle into the hole of the ball. Indeed! And how often does one manage that in succession? On good days I manage 10!”

The *Bilboquet*’s obvious evocation of sexuality must have influenced Duchamp to adopt it. His version may be interpreted as a three-dimensional postcard to his fellow artist Max Bergmann (1884-1955) recalling their promiscuous time bar-hopping in Paris together (Naumann 1993:81). Duchamp inscribed the ball’s surface “Souvenir de Paris / A mon ami M. Bergmann / Duchamp printemps 1910” (Duchamp 1975:81). Francis Naumann, who considers



A. H. Katz (France).
Les Jeux de l'Amour : Le Bilboquet,
c. 1914. Postcard.
Courtesy of Rudolf Herz, Munich, DE.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Le Bilboquet, 1910.
Wooden ball, Ø:10,
wooden handle, L:22.
Courtesy of Sammlung Ursula
and Klaus-Peter Bergmann,
Haimhausen, DE.

Bilboquet to be Duchamp's first readymade, suggests that it might be a souvenir of a bordello visit (Naumann 1999:40-41). Naumann explores the possibility of a sexual reading of this "toy ball-cum-handle with naughty little impaling prong" (Naumann 2000:100-101). The morphology of this piece, however, with the obviously phallic handle and womb-like ball, parts that if correctly manipulated merge one into the other, evokes sexual coupling. The impaling prong yearns for its complement, in this case the ball with a hole in it, to complete the action. This task poses a real challenge, however and may prove futile. This activity could refer to Duchamp's fascination with inconsequential motion and its sexual associations. Addressed in many other readymades, as well as in the *Glass*, this idea of the futile sexual act appears to be one of Duchamp's central preoccupations.



Pierre Bonnard
(France, 1867-1947).
Alphabet du Père Ubu. Voyelles:
I. - La jubilation du Père Ubu, 1901.
Detail from lithograph on paper.
Paris, FR: Bibliothèque des Arts
Decoratifs.

Furthermore, Naumann claims that Duchamp's *Bilboquet* derives from Alfred Jarry, who not only referred to a bilboquet in his 1897 novel *Days and Nights*, but in whose 1901 almanach, illustrated by Pierre Bonnard, "the character Père Ubu is rendered vigorously playing with a bilboquet positioned between his legs (a possible allusion to masturbation, not so farfetched considering that one of the only rules of the game of bilboquet is that it be played by a single player)" (Naumann 2000:100-101). For those avant-gardists versed in Homer, like Jarry, who would be inspired to provoke the sexual implication of scenes like the encounter of Odysseus and Nausicaä, the bilboquet was ideally suited. The vignette at issue here is captioned "*Alphabet of Father Ubu. Vowels: I. - Father Ubu's Jubilation*", which was meant to allude to the phallic resemblance of the capital letter 'I'. Such was a characteristic subversive device by which Jarry "ubused" culture and ground codes and conventions.

Here, the masturbatory fantasy of Ubu, may allude to the wet imagination of Homer. Duchamp could have had both Homer and Jarry in mind when he was personalising by inscription his own *Bilboquet*.

The Ominous Power of Duchamp's *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?*

II.13

Raymond Roussel's play *Impressions of Africa* that Duchamp saw on 10 June 1912, featured, amongst other bodily sounds, comical sneezes produced by Stephen Alcott and echoed by the reverberating noses of his six sons (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 10/6/1912). This was new music to the ears of the Parisian audience, which must have affected Duchamp more indelibly than others. It is highly unlikely, however, that he had this scene in mind when in 1921 he crafted his most bizarre work, the notorious aided readymade, *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* Note that it was later in 1921, when the second "r" appeared in Rose's name, emphasising the pun with the word eros.

This work was commissioned to Duchamp by Dorothea Dreier, sister of his patron Katherine S. Dreier, giving him \$300 and *carte blanche* to provide whatever he wished. So, he presented her with a birdcage that holds 152 pieces of marble shaped like sugar lumps, a thermometer and a cuttlebone used as a dietary supplement for caged birds, all blending in their relative whiteness. Not liking the work, Dorothea sold it to her sister and then Katherine asked Duchamp to pass it on. Thus began this work's Odyssey. Initially, Duchamp placed it in the hands of Henri-Pierre Roché, in Paris, with whom it remained, unsold until the 1930s. Breton included a photograph of it in the catalogue of the May 1935 surrealist exhibition he organised in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. The work itself was placed on exhibition for the first time in a 1936 show of surrealist objects at Galerie Charles Ratton, Paris and reproduced in a special issue of *Cahiers d'Art*. That show was seen by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, who was organising the exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, for December of that year and borrowed it from Roché. So, it returned to America. After New York, it travelled with the surrealist exhibition in 1937 and when it reached San Francisco, Duchamp's other patron Walter Arensberg purchased it for the same amount that Dreier had paid for it. The work remained with him until 1950, when he placed the Arensberg Collection with the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

At a 1964 slide lecture, Duchamp explained, "This little birdcage is filled with sugar lumps... but the sugar lumps are made of marble and when you lift it, you are surprised by the unexpected weight." (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:295). This statement about *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* brings to mind the 1925 poster that Duchamp designed for the French Chess Championship at Nice. The accumulation of weighty marble cubes in the stiff cage is in direct contrast with the light cubic building blocks that Duchamp tossed into a net bag in order to serve as prototype for their chance configuration in the poster, appearing there weightless against a silhouette of a Stanton model chess king's crown. In this poster, Duchamp's reliance on the elements of play and chance is again clearly evident. There too, the cubes are white with middle-shadows in pink and full-shadows in black.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?, 1921,
New York.
Aided readymade:
152 marble cubes, thermometer
and cuttlebone in painted metal
birdcage, 12 x 22 x 16.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art - The Louise and
Walter Arensberg Collection.

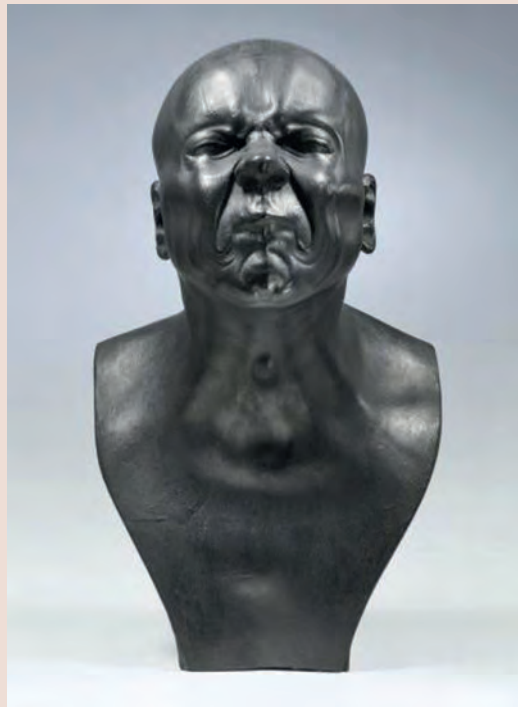


Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Échecs : Championnat de France,
2-11 September 1925, Nice.
Poster, 78 x 58.
Courtesy of Rhonda Roland Shearer
Collection, New York, NY.



Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
Dreams That Money Can Buy, 1947.
Colour film, 01:39:00.
New York, NY: Films
International of America.

himself, standing frozen, surrounded by blocks of ice. Arguably, this scene is a psychoanalytic introspection of the doctor himself. Still, with *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* in mind, Joe appears like the thermometer amidst the marble, which recalls Duchamp's saying, "Marble is cold generally, so there is a thermometer to indicate it" (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 11/5/1935).



Franz Xaver Messerschmidt
(Germany, 1736-1783).
*Character Head: Smell causing
Sneeze - No. 31*, c. 1770.
Patinated plaster, H:47.
Vienna, AT: Österreichische
Galerie Belvedere.

wonderful physiognomic study of facial musculature. Other than such a visual take, however, the subject of sneezing lends itself in no other art form, but in the new music of Roussel's play (see I.5) and literature.

The first known occurrence of the sneeze in world literature occurs in Homer. From the outset, it is worth noting that in ancient Greece the sneeze was believed to be a prophetic omen from the gods. A divine moment of sneezing occurs in the *Odyssey*. When Penelope learns from the noble swineherd Eumaeus that a stranger has arrived, who claims to have heard that Odysseus is near, she speaks aloud her thought, "But if Odysseus could come and return to the land of his fathers, / soon with his son, he could punish the violence of these people." (Lattimore 1965:17.539-540). At that moment, Telemachus sneezed so loudly that the whole palace shook. This caused Penelope to laugh with joy, reassured that it is a sign from the gods and said to Eumaeus, "Go, please and summon the stranger into my presence. Do you / not see how my son sneezed for everything I have spoken? / May it mean that death, accomplished in full, befall the suitors / each and all, not one avoiding death and destruction." (ib. 1965:17.544-547). Penelope, who is known to cry throughout most of the *Odyssey*, here laughs with joy, reassured that her son's sneeze is a sign from the gods, interpreting it as a divine confirmation of her death wish against her suitors.

In an interview on French television in 1963, Duchamp remarked, "The cage with sugar cubes is called *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* and, of course, the title seems weird to you since there is really no connection between the sugar cubes and a sneeze... First of all there is a dissociational gap between the idea of sneezing and the idea of... 'Why not sneeze?' because, after all, you don't sneeze at will. So, the answer to the question 'Why not sneeze?' is simply that you can't sneeze *at will!* And then there is the literary side, if I may call it that... but 'literary' is such a stupid word... it doesn't mean anything... but at any rate there's the marble with its coldness and this means that you can even say you're cold, because of the marble and all the associations are permissible." (Drot 1963). This statement, then, allows associating the cold marble with ice cubes. In Hans Richter's 1947 film *Dreams That Money Can Buy*, to which Duchamp contributed a scenario, Joe sets up a business selling tailor-made dreams to a variety of frustrated and neurotic clients. In his waiting room, he finds his next customer to be

In any case, Duchamp's subjection of this bizarre work's constituent elements to dislocation from their normal and material functions forces the viewer to think of their new condition and their relationship to him and the world (Golding 1973:56). *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* seems to be also about something else, more intelligible. The 'sneeze' is described as the emission of air suddenly, forcibly and audibly through the nose and mouth by involuntary, spasmodic action, due to irritation of one's nostrils. The function of sneezing is to expel mucus containing irritants from the nasal cavity. As a subject it has hardly bothered visual artists other than the German sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, whose developing paranoia in the 1770s impelled him to produce his most famous group of works, the studies of faces known today as *Character Heads* that broke with the traditional formula for grand Baroque portraits. *No. 31* from this series exemplifies the most unusual and difficult representation of a smell causing sneeze, a

Responding to Homer's *Odyssey*, Joyce brings up the sneeze in his *Ulysses* as many as eight times. The most telling reference is Stephen's description of an aging Ann Hathaway, wife of Shakespeare, who was believed to have been already pregnant when the couple married and repents for her sins, "She read or had read to her his chapbooks preferring them to the *Merry Wives* and, loosing her nightly waters on the Jordan, she thought over *Hooks and Eyes for Believers' Breeches* and *The Most Spiritual Snuffbox to Make the Most Devout Souls Sneeze*." (Joyce 1934:9.204). The above excerpt is a camouflaged allusion to the spiritual dimension of the sneeze.

The ancient Greek belief that the sneeze is a miraculous sign from the gods is rather a ridiculous idea. Be that as it may, it survived through the centuries as a superstition. As a matter of fact, in certain parts of Greece today, when someone is asserting something and the listener sneezes promptly at the end of the assertion, the former responds, "bless you and I am speaking the truth". Moreover, in Western culture the typical response after a sneeze is "bless you". This response's origin is found in the superstitious belief that connects evil to sneezing, such as the thought that a sneeze releases a soul to the waiting grasp of evil spirits. Hence, a blessing is needed. Doubtless, it was this silly tradition that Duchamp took advantage of with this work. The sneeze is actually nothing but an instantaneous nasal event. The supernatural causality that tradition attaches to it contradicts natural science.

In studying *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?*, perhaps an Homeric exegesis may help to unravel its enigma. If Rose Sélavy references Penelope, then the title of this work makes sense with regard to the aforementioned sneezing incident in Book 17 of the *Odyssey*. In that case, Rose, before becoming Rose, probably wonders with scepticism if any sneeze could stand today for what it did in antiquity – an omen.

II.14

Odysseus and the *Marchand du sel*: Duchamp's *In Advance of the Broken Arm* as the *Winnowing Fan*



Alexander Stoddart (Scotland, b. 1959). *The Last Voyage and The Sacrifice of Odysseus, according to Tiresias*, 2009. Portland stone, 130 x 340 / 130 x 150. Courtesy of Richard Green, London, UK.

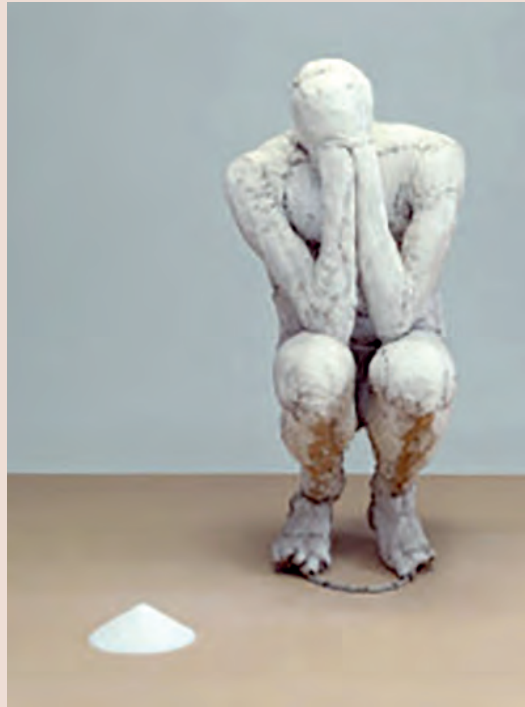
Homer wrote, *para thin' alos atrygetoio* (*Iliad* A.316), which is translated as “along the beach of the barren [better: unharvested] salt sea” (Lattimore 1951:1.316). From this sentence it is concluded that the term *als* (sea) is cognate with *alas* (salt). More important, however, is the poetic description of the sea as a plain offered for harvest. How could such an allegorical meaning contribute to discourse?

The main decorative element of the Richard Green gallery, London, is a relief in three separate yet related panels by Alexander Stoddart, depicting the last voyage and the sacrifice of Odysseus as foretold by the spirit of the blind seer Tiresias in *Nekyia*, Book 11 of the *Odyssey*. This is where the ghost of the Theban prophet describes a scenario in the aftermath of Odysseus' return to Ithaca, after the great slaughter of the suitors – “then you must take up your well-shaped oar and go on a journey / until you come where there are men living who know nothing / of the sea and who eat food that is not mixed with salt, who never / have known well-shaped oars, which act for ships as wings do. / And I will tell you a very clear proof and you cannot miss it. / When, as you walk, some other wayfarer happens to meet you, / and says you carry a winnow-fan [sic] on your bright shoulder, / then you must plant your well-shaped oar in the ground and render / ceremonies sacrifice to the lord Poseidon, / one ram and one bull and a mounter of sows, a boar pig, / and make your way home again and render holy hecatombs / to the immortal gods who hold the wide heaven, all / of them in order” (Lattimore 1965:11.121-134). The best Byzantine commentator on Homer, Eustathius Archbishop of Thessalonica (1115-1195), explained the text above as follows:

And Teiresias' advice wants Odysseus to take an oar on his shoulders and to travel until he comes to men who do not know of the sea or who have never taken a meal with salt or who do not know ships i.e. so that Poseidon the landlord may be honoured in places where his name is not spoken of. For [it is] a certain honour for some to be honoured amongst people who do not know them. On which account the person who speaks praises for some to those who know, might hear [in answer] the following: “you speak these things to those who know the Achaeans”. And who might be those who do not know Poseidon? Those who do not know what is mentioned above. And the ancients mention certain heavy-sounding names of place in foreign language, some referring to a certain Bounima or Kelkea, in which Odysseus honoured Poseidon. (Stallbaum 1826:402 / Translation by Dr Antony Makrinos).

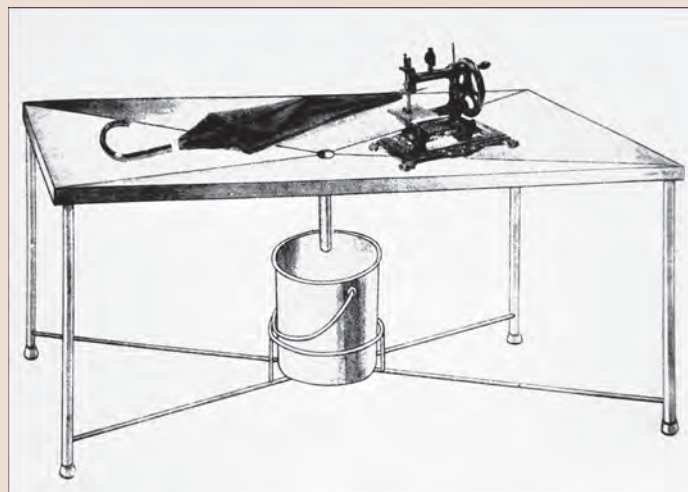
Eustathius explained that the people ignorant of salt is a category of distant inland foreigners who ignore the habits of Achaeans and would benefit from compensating for this ignorance. Therefore, in Homer's mind the salt, as linked to the sea, would have served as an emblem of travelling by sea, which required special skills of navigation and hence as allegory of the culture of commerce and exchange, which results in civilisation by Hellenic standards. When Eustathius was writing in about 1180, the saltless people were the Muslims (though the scope of his research did not touch on this matter). Eustathius was teacher of rhetoric in Constantinople's Patriarchal School, which was the leading centre of education. Ironically, the civilising influences filtering into Islam from the leading cities of Byzantium – Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople – in the course of centuries gave the Muslims the dynamic energy for subsequently conquering the Byzantine Empire. In the 20th century the saltless people would be those who have not shed salty tears in response to the World Wars and the relevant Holocausts. Some such idea would have prompted Miroslaw Balka to create his *Salt Seller* to mourn for the extermination of the undesirables – Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, the disabled and homosexuals – by the Nazis. Caught with his knees crouched and hands pressed against his eyes, the *Salt Seller* remains still beside a mound of salt, crystallised tears, which is all he has left to sell.

A figure strongly associated with salt was Odysseus. To feign madness, by which to avoid conscription to the Trojan War, Odysseus sowed salt, which would render his field barren (Apollodorus 1921:E.iii.7). He gave up this trick to save his newborn son that the recruiters planted in the field he was ploughing. Much after the war that he won, he was required to appease Poseidon, whom he transgressed by putting out the single eye of his dear son Polyphemus. Tiresias advised Odysseus to travel away from home in a land where the sea is unknown and so is as far from Greece as can be imagined. In other words, he had to travel extensively landwards, rather than by sea, with whose hazards he was familiar, until proof of his change of habit is given by the local people mistaking the most commonplace object to be found in Greece – the oar. Ultimately, Homer was describing a known distant place north of the Black Sea, in the heart of the Ukraine or suchlike steppe. Once in this kind of grassland the oar is mistaken



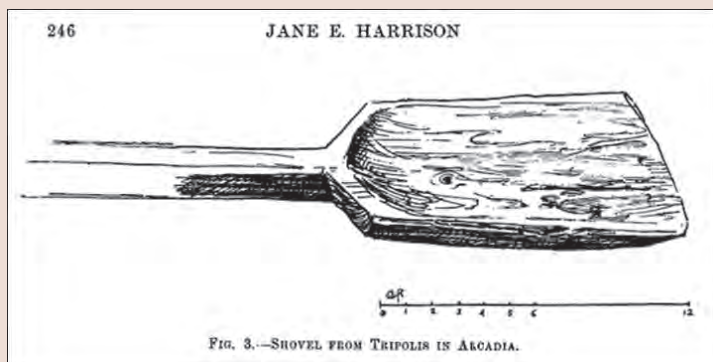
Mirosław Balka
(Poland, b. 1958).
The Salt Seller, 1988.
Wood, jute, salt and
steel, 107 x 56 x 36.
Michigan, IL: Art Institute of
Chicago.

as *athereloigón*, which means winnowing fan, he should stop, plant his oar in the ground and make of it a makeshift altar to Poseidon, thus introducing the god of the sea to a people who are unversed in him. Before this altar, Odysseus must make sacrifice, after which he is to return to Ithaca, until he leaves again to die from the sea. Stoddart masterfully elaborates on the scenes inspired by the prophecy to create a simple allegory. The figure at the extreme left of the large panel is the good swineherd Eumaeus, who is the stalwart advocate of Odysseus' return to Ithaca. The old woman seen immediately next to him, behind Penelope, is Eurycleia, the wet nurse of Odysseus, who first recognises the hero on his arrival at the Palace by the boar-tusk scar on his thigh. These two figures, together with a notional offspring of Argos the dog, represent those common people of low socio-economic station and scant education that recognise truth when they see it and act on moral impulses rather than the expedient imperatives that the suitor type typically does. Thus, in this allegory, they represent those people who, when asked about art, say that they know nothing about it, but know what they like or like what they know. Odysseus, representing classical art, following the Trojan War, which alludes to the slaughter of the Great War, travels to a region completely alien to Greece, where the customary things are entirely unknown, that is Modernism. At the other end, the male figure is Telemachus and the female ones those who will follow Odysseus to the outlandish regions. They represent the traditionalists of Classicism who travelled into the wasteland and met those saltless barbarians in the galleries, reception halls and the salons of hardline contemporaneity of New Bond Street. The *Sacrifice* panel simply shows Odysseus and the stranger who asks about the winnowing fan. Before the stranger is his little son, in a barbaric crotchless trouser exposing his genitals like in Donatello's *Amor-Attis* of 1440 (Bargello, Florence), whose symbolical mystery is too arcane to perceive nowadays. The oar, emblematic of all things Grecian, is set up in a culture temporally and geographically distant from its original conditions on Richard Green gallery, the very building upon which this allegory is played out. In view of the extreme lengths modern art took to distance itself from its classical origins in Greece, the prophecy of Tiresias is of relevance. Odysseus' oar set in the middle of an endless prairie, is emblematic of utmost pathos and as image is comparable to the well-known verse in Comte de Lautréamont's 1868 *Song VI*, describing a young boy, "beautiful [...] as the



Man Ray
(USA, 1890-1976).
Homage to Lautréamont, 1933.
Published in *Minotaure*, no. 3-4,
12 Dec. 1933:101.

chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella” (Lautréamont 1938:256). This erotic verse, which Man Ray illustrated in his 1933 *Homage to Lautréamont*, was often used by André Breton as a paradigm of surrealist dislocation and had a major influence on modern art, especially as Duchamp’s aided readymades exemplify.



Jane Ellen Harrison
(England, 1850-1928).
Shovel from Tripolis in Arcadia
(c. 19th) in the R. C. Bosanquet
Collection, published in *The Journal
of Hellenic Studies*, 1904:246.
Athens, GR: The Archaeological
Society at Athens.

winning fan in Homeric days was made of wood in such a shape that an oar could be mistaken for it. The contemporary spade-shaped shovel, bought by Mr R. C. Bosanquet at Tripolis in Arcadia (The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), rudely hewn out of the native fir, might easily be confused with a paddle-shaped oar (Harrison 1904:246). In his commentary on the *Georgics* (29 BC) of Virgil, Servius describes the fan as “cribrum areale”, the sieve of the threshing floor. The function that the sieve and fan have in common is that they are both implements employed in the purifying of grain by winnowing (Harrison 1903:293). The difficult task of the winnowing consists in using the fan to toss up from the threshing floor the mix of heavy grain and light chaff, so that, thus exposed to the wind or by their own weight, the former would fall short in a growing heap while the latter would be carried to a distance.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Photograph of
In Advance of the Broken Arm (1915)
from *Box in a Valise* (1941-1942),
New York.
Collage on print, 15 x 7.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art.

What is more, in the first book of *Georgics*, Virgil refers to the service of Ceres with the *mystica vannus Iacchi* (*Georgics* I.166). He calls it the mystic fan of Iacchus, because the rites of Father Liber had reference to the purification of the soul and men are purified in his mysteries as grain is purified by fans (Harrison 1903:293). Considering the winnowing fan’s mystical extension, along with the Greek term’s aforementioned oracular quality, Duchamp may have found an ideal opportunity to make enigmatic reference to it with the snow shovel on which he inscribed the title, *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, his first readymade after he moved to the United States, in 1915. This work has long been held to be self-referential. Duchamp’s fondness of reverberating puns encouraged later commentators to give the shovel a phallic interpretation with the title insinuating castration (*The Société Anonyme and the Deier Bequest at Yale University*

1984:244). Actually, however, it is a shovel used also to throw salt in advance of a snowfall. This shovel’s probable relation to the Homeric *Winnowing Fan* endows it with qualities in keeping with Duchamp’s blasphemous iconoclastic program. The collage of the 1915 readymade shovel against a photograph of his New York studio, around 1920, as he retouched it for *Box in a Valise* of 1942, shows it stagily suspended from a hook in the air as a *deus ex machina*. Its verticality echoes the upright planting of Odysseus’ oar, standing for the resolution of the struggle in rest. Its downward orientation, a reversal of its possible reference, may serve as yet another layer of removal from the original object in the artist’s mind. What matters most, however, is the fine irony in the artistic rationale that Duchamp’s emblem of relocation appropriates Odysseus’ trophy of dislocation.

The occult significance of salt may further be figured by the myth of the contest between Athena and Poseidon for the patronage of Athens, as represented on the west pediment of the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis. Athena won by her gift of the olive tree, over Poseidon, who offered a salty spring. The bipolarity of the two gifts is clear. The olive tree associates with the feminine trait of proactive thinking offering a respected and useful



Benvenuto Cellini
(Florence, 1500-1571).
Saltcellar, 1540-1543.
Gold, enamel, ivory and
ebony, 26 x 289 x 22.
Vienna, AT: Kunsthistorisches
Museum.

plant that is rooted on earth, emblematic of the home. On the other hand, the spring is a masculine symbol of perpetual change, fluidity and instability and its salty water unmistakably refers to the sea. Therefore, the salt is emblematic of all things associated to the seafaring travels of the sailor either as a merchant, warrior or adventurer.

The link of salt to the sea and its god, combined with a high value and esoteric meaning, is attested by Benvenuto Cellini's most remarkable work, his *Saltcellar* of 1543, an ornamental salt and pepper holder for the King of France, Francis I. It was made of gold, ebony and enamel in the style of the School of Fontainebleau and of the late Renaissance Italian Mannerism. It allegorically portrays Ocean and Earth (Symonds 1901:II.36), represented by salt and pepper. The former is personified by the form of Poseidon, born by four seahorses, holding a trident in his right hand and seaweed and mussels in his left hand, with a boat at his side, in which to receive the salt. The latter appears as Gaia, perched on an elephant, pressing her nipple with her left hand and having her right hand holding a cluster of fruit, by a small Ionic temple on her side, in which to keep the pepper. The legs of the two gods are intertwined, the way Cellini imagined the limbs of land and sea to be conjoined, symbolising their unity. Additional reclining figures, representing winds and the times of day, are carved into the base upon which the whole object stands.

However, the fact that the salt is destined for a vessel floating on waves in Poseidon's care and the pepper for a temple fixed on land by the side of Gaia evokes Cellini's broader agenda about gender differences if not a segmentation scheme.

From 1922 the French surrealist poet Robert Desnos started using Duchamp's pseudonym Rose Sélavy in a series of aphorisms, puns and spoonerisms. Desnos tried to portray Rose Sélavy as a long-lost aristocrat and rightful queen of France. Aphorism 13 paid homage to Marcel Duchamp: "Rose Sélavy connaît bien le marchand du sel" (Rose Sélavy knows the salt seller well); in French the final words *marchand du sel* are an anagrammatization of *marsel duchand* with a clear reference to the artist's name. Note also that the essential writings of Duchamp, compiled by Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson in 1973, are entitled *Salt Seller*. The association of Duchamp with salt is doubtless informed by the layered meanings surrounding it. The connection of salt to Odysseus and Poseidon is given. In ancient Greece salt further represented friendship and hospitality. When Christ described his Apostles as "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13) he



Paper back cover of Sanouillet and Peterson's *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp, Marchand du sel* (1975).

alluded to their purity and strength in the face of corruption. In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, a loving daughter is disowned by her father because she says she loves him only as much as the salt in her food. Much later the father is invited to a grand wedding feast where the food, prepared without salt, is bland and tasteless, at which point he realises his mistake.

Of course, salt has a dual nature; it is required for life, but it can also bring death. It is essential for the human body to become chemically balanced and for the muscles and nervous system to function. All bodily fluids are salty – blood, sweat, tears, saliva and sperm. The general consensus among experts is that a healthy adult should aim towards a daily intake of five or six grams of salt to maintain a good balance. Salt overdose, however, brings about death. This is why the Dead Sea is lifeless. In many respects Duchamp's notorious silence and seeming abstinence from art may be considered to be an overdose of salt. The painter Jeanne Reynal said of him: "He gave up life while still alive... He is very much alive. But he can observe the impact of his work, while he is alive, but as if he were dead." (Drot 1963).



Gustave Courbet's *The Origin of the World* (1866) + Orlan's *The Origin of the War* (1989-2012) = *Salt and Pepper Yin-Yang* (2016). Digital collage by the author.

Pepper is a flowering vine, cultivated for its fruit, which is usually dried and used as a seasoning. It was an uncommon and expensive item, affordable only to the wealthy. Pepper is the symbol of excitement and flavour (Seaman and Philbin 2006: ad loc). As such, pepper evokes the things that one is missing in life, some of which may relate to one's hidden desires as well. This brings to mind Gustave Courbet's *The Origin of the World* (1866), a picture focusing on the female model's bushy and cavernous vagina that is the source of life if it is fertilised by the phallus.

Salt is the only edible mineral, one of its many contradictions. It exists in vast quantities in the sea and is readily available by the evaporation of seawater. It is emblematic of the seaman and his challenge at sea. Salt is at the root of the Latin term *salarium*, with reference to money and its monetary significance led to the expression "being worth one's salt". It is clear that salt is a quality linked to masculinity and a male activity. This prompted Orlan to appropriate Courbet's work and create its pendant, titled *The Origin of War* (2016), using the respective naked portion of a male model with his erect phallus as the instrument of aggression. When Heraclitus said, "War is the father and king of all and has produced some as gods and some as men and has made some slaves and some free." (Plutarch 1970:370), he meant that war brings about the necessary change from stagnation. Such change is an indicator of the dynamism in society which may serve for or against its culture.

Salt and pepper are the spices of life. Salt is the king of spices for seasoning, while pepper follows in popularity. Salt and pepper complement one another and both are required to give flavour to life. The former can be taken to be emblematic of conceptual art, whereas the latter of traditional mimesis. Duchamp associates with the salt and represents at once the Salt Seller and the Saltcellar. If for Duchamp salt was avant-garde conceptualism, pepper would suggest people's attachment to conventional representation. Both are useful. The sad fact is that a traditional mindset resists progress and will not make an effort to appreciate the avant-garde, whereas the avant-gardist uses tradition as a springboard for advancement. This ignorance of the conservative public, which is ignorant of the cultural need to see the conceptual beyond the retinal, is a condition that needs to be recuperated for a balance to be achieved. This is why the salt-selling Duchamp remains as useful and necessary posthumously today as ever. And in this respect, Duchamp is evocative of Odysseus who disseminated salt to the saltless people.

The Enigma of Duchamp's *Door for Gradiva*

II.15

The French writer and poet André Breton (1896-1966) opened the art gallery *Gradiva* at 31 Rue de Seine, Paris, in 1937. This gallery's name is the title of a novel by the German writer Wilhelm Jensen (1827-1911). *Gradiva* is a girl from Pompeii depicted on a funerary relief who reminded Hanold, the son of an archaeologist, so much of a past lover from his youth that he became obsessed with the dead girl, thus causing the suppression of his



Anonymous (France).
Façade of André Breton's "Gradiva" gallery, on the Left Bank, 31 rue de Seine, Paris, c. 1937.
Paris, FR: Association Atelier André Breton.

sexuality. Only when he met a real person who resembled the girl on the relief and when they kissed each other on the threshold of a temple to Apollo in a blistering sun and amidst a swarm of flies, was Hanold able to cure himself. Sigmund Freud, in his 1907 essay *Delusion and Dream in Jensen's "Gradiva"*, mentioned this story as an example of successful therapy. Furthermore, on the label of the gallery each letter of *Gradiva* was identified with the initial of various women-related muses of surrealist history or mythology: 'G' for Gisèle Prassinos, a French writer of Greek descent; 'R' for Rosine, the protagonist in Jacques Cazotte's novel *The Devil in Love*; 'A' for Alice, the protagonist of the famous story by Lewis Carroll; 'D' for Dora, Freud's patient whose case became famous among psychoanalysts; 'I' for Inês de Castro, best known as lover of King Peter I of Portugal; 'V' for Violette Nozière, the French prostitute who became a parricide in 1933; 'A' for Alice Rahon, a French/Mexican poet and artist (Ana Panero Gómez 2012:176). In a text he wrote to introduce the gallery, Breton mentioned that the name *Gradiva* not only evoked "the marvellous book of Jensen", but also signified "she who advances; the beauty of tomorrow – still hidden from most people" (Breton 1952; Brechon 1971:162), a metaphor for advanced art. Significantly for both Duchamp's cut-out design of *Door for Gradiva* (1937) and the ruin of *Étant donné*s (1944-1966), Paul Éluard thought of *Gradiva* as "the woman whose glance pierces walls" (Chadwick 2002:51).



René Magritte
(Belgium, 1898-1967).
The Unexpected Answer, 1933.
Oil on canvas, 81 x 54 cm.
Brussels, BE: Musée René Magritte.

Commissioned to design the entrance to the gallery, Duchamp incised on the glass door the rough silhouette of a couple of lovers attached to form a single space. His idea was reminiscent of a surrealist principle in René Magritte's 1933 painting *The Unexpected Answer*, representing a door with an irregular shape cut out of it, through which the viewer's gaze is led into a cavernous room. Magritte wrote, "through this hole we see darkness; this last image seems to be enhanced yet again if we light up the invisible thing hidden by the darkness, for our gaze always wants to go further and to see at last the object, the reason for our existence" (quoted in Whitfield 1992:62). Magritte's negative shape is even more mysterious than its peep-show view of a room full of shadow. The shape is indeed anthropomorphic, as a door is involved, but remains uncanny, as it is reminiscent of something too enigmatic to interpret spontaneously. The shape's upper portion clearly recalls the outline of a conventional amorous couple seen in profile – a tall man on the right and a slightly lower woman

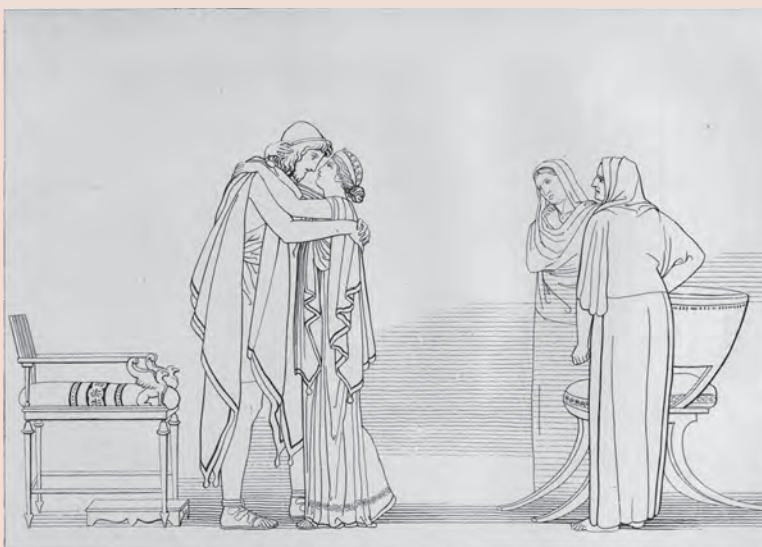
on the other side. Its lower part, however, has such a rich yet molten contour that at best suggests recording in space and time this couple's movement, more likely during sexual intercourse in a position standing up.



Auguste Rodin
(France, 1840-1917).
L'Olivier, dit aussi Pénélope,
c. 1898.
Graphite and watercolour
on paper, 50 x 33.
Paris, FR: Musée Rodin.

The most legendary union of all time is the moment when Odysseus and Penelope reunite. What makes it exceptionally memorable and extremely powerful is the incredible amount of temporal delay and psychological teasing that is involved. So much so, that when Penelope's faithful nurse goes to her chamber to reveal to her at last that "Odysseus is here, he is in the house" (Lattimore 1965:23.7), Penelope scolds her for waking her with senselessness. This leads Eurycleia to further disclose that "He is that stranger-guest, whom all in the house were abusing" (*ib.* 1965:23.28). Still in disbelief, Eurycleia told her of the proof that she discovered upon washing his feet of the familiar old scar on his foot that a wild boar had inflicted with his teeth (Lattimore 1965:23.73-75). That information impelled her to come down from her chamber, "her heart pondering / much, whether to keep away from her dear husband, or go to him and kiss his head, taking his hands." (*ib.* 1965:23.85-87). Choosing to sit "a long time in silence" (*ib.* 1965:23.93) across him, she said in response to her son's bewilderment at her coldness, "My child, the spirit that is in me is full of wanderment, / and I cannot find anything to say to him, nor question him, / nor look him straight in the face. But if he is truly Odysseus, / and he has come home, then we shall find other ways and better, / to recognise each other, for we have signs that we know of / between the two of us only, but they are secret from others." (*ib.* 1965:23.105-110). Subsequently, after they parted to get together refreshed, she posited to him the trick that firmly proved for her his identity. She ordered Eurycleia to move the bed that Odysseus himself built outside their chamber so that he could sleep there. To this order Odysseus responded with anger and said that only a god could change its position as the particular bridal bed was immovable – he had made a bedpost of the bole of an olive tree, around which he personally laid the whole chamber from floor to roof. The central dimension of the bed in life, as inspired by Homer, was cited as

much by Duchamp in the environment he created for the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* (Galerie Beaux-Arts, Paris, January–February 1938) as by Joyce in *Ulysses*, "...the bed of conception and of birth, of consummation of marriage and of breach of marriage, of sleep and of death." (Joyce 1934:17.716). A reminder of the olive stump that was part of Odysseus' marital bed was referred to by Rodin in his *L'Olivier, dit aussi Pénélope* (*Olive Tree, also called Penelope*) of c. 1898. It shows *Penelope* tending one arm in a vacuum, as if in an attempt to fumble absence. As indicated by the notation "olive tree" near her name, a sapling olive in brown watercolour grows alongside her body, while her arm deployed as a branch suggests the tree. The peculiarity of Odysseus' bedpost, apart from underlining the bed as symbol of harmonious marriage, was wittily used by Penelope as the ultimate sign by which to test her true husband's identity.



John Flaxman
(England, 1755-1826).
*The Odyssey of Homer, Plate XXXI:
The Meeting of Odysseus and Penelope*,
1805. Etching on paper, 17 x 25.
London, UK: Tate Gallery.

Once Penelope is satisfied, "her knees and the heart went slack / as she recognised the clear proofs that Odysseus had given; / but then she burst into tears and ran straight to him, throwing / her arms around the neck of Odysseus and kissed his head" (Lattimore 1965:23.205-208). This is exactly the scene that Flaxman represented – Odysseus and Penelope in mutual embrace, here between the two thrones from which they got up, in the presence of Eurycleia and another caring maid. This embrace is a climactic moment in the whole epic, which has been tirelessly quoted by artists.

As the *Odyssey* has been Western literature's most famous and influential story, the reunification of Odysseus and Penelope would likely come to the mind of anyone versed in the Classics before such scenes of "much-longed-for homecoming" (*ib.* 1965:23.351). This very scene was the culmination

of the large series of watercolour drawings dedicated to the *Odyssey* that Rodin created in the late 1890s. It presents the intense reunion with the legendary couple embracing. The red-pink wash, which this time surrounds the couple and the green olive foliage flanking it draws this series to a triumphant close. Drawn and painted directly from the model, the figures acquire Rodin's typical sense of spontaneousness that rids them from detail while endowing them with molten quality that glues separate bodies as a unified whole.

It is possible that Duchamp saw this picture in Rodin's 1909 exhibition at Galerie Devambez, Paris. In any case however, he may have had this scene in mind, whether consciously or subconsciously, when in 1910 he created a drawing of a similarly embracing couple. Using himself as model, the young woman held here in his tender embrace was a beautiful twenty-year-old artist's model named Jeanne Serre, who lived across from Duchamp at 6 Rue Amiral de Joinville, in Neuilly. Serre, whom he had known intimately, also posed for one of the female figures in his 1911 painting *The Bush*. According to Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, the inscription recalls the 1910 visit to Paris of the young Munich artist Max Bergmann. He and Duchamp attended the Salon de la Société Nationale des Baux-Arts at the Grand Palais on 16 April, where Bergmann met Serre (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 16/4/1910). The two men renewed their friendship in July 1912, when Duchamp arrived in Munich for a two-month stay. He inscribed and postdated the drawing then. Incidentally, Duchamp's reconnection with Serre (then Mayer) after fifty-five years at an opening party held at the Galerie Louis Carré, Paris, on 23 June 1966, gave him the chance to meet for the first time his daughter, the artist Yo Savy (born Yvonne Serre, 1911-2003), whose existence he knew about (Naumann 1993:81). This surviving drawing, then, is retrospectively charged with great emotion and its intensity can be considered comparable to the aforementioned Homeric climax.

The fact of the matter is that the same subject of standing embracing lovers appeared in 1937 on Duchamp's *Door for Gradiva*. In this latter instance, however, the iconography is likely to have been informed by his experience of Arnold Böcklin's work at the Kunstmuseum Basel in 1912. Arguably, Duchamp's *Door* shares the ambiguity of Magritte's pictorial riddle, since it is closed while bearing an aperture. Standing at the entrance of the gallery, visitors had to pass through the doorway's silhouette in order to gain access to the exhibition. The aperture's outline is as molten and indistinct as in *The Unexpected Answer*. Looking carefully, however, the two figures, likewise discrepant in height, are silhouetted frontally rather than in profile. The digital collage of the figure of Odysseus in Böcklin's painting *Odysseus and Calypso* of 1883 (see p. 48) seen in reverse (note that the *Door* could be seen from the other way around) onto the sketch for the replica of *Door for Gradiva*, shows that the two lateral edges of the aperture obliquely echo his silhouette. As Odysseus therein is wrapped in a shroud, his form explains the molten quality of his contour. It seems that Duchamp referred to Odysseus' silhouette either very loosely or, more likely, from memory. If that may indeed be the case, the same figure of Odysseus yields both the male side on the left and the female on the right. Such an iconographical solution is in keeping with Freud's position "that all human individuals, as a result of their bisexual disposition and of cross-inheritance, combine in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics" (Freud 1977:342).



Auguste Rodin (France, 1840-1917). *Couple enlacé debout, de profil. Ulysse et Pénélope réunis*, c. 1898. Graphite and watercolour on paper, 50 x 33. Paris, FR: Musée Rodin. | Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Couple Embracing*, 1910, Paris. Pencil on paper, 17 x 11. Courtesy of Sammlung Ursula and Klaus-Peter Bergmann, Haimhausen, DE.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Replica of *Door for Gradiva*, 1937/1968, New York. Plexiglass, 198 x 132. Darmstadt, DE: Hessisches Landesmuseum. | Figure of Odysseus from Arnold Böcklin's *Odysseus and Calypso* (1883) on Duchamp's study of *Door for Gradiva* (1968). | Marcel Duchamp (*ib.*). Announcement for the *Doors* Exhibition, 1968, New York. Poster: paper cutout, 56 x 39. New York, NY: Cordier & Ekstrom.

What is more, despite the attached couple forming a single space, the orientation of the male head seems to suggest departure. Though it is tempting to imagine Calypso in the place of the female, which would effectively echo Odysseus' decision to part from her, it is more likely that here takes place the long-awaited reunion of him with Penelope. But even in this latter scenario, Odysseus brought up parting from Penelope soon after their legendary embrace, only 66 lines down the poem, "Your heart will have no joy in this; and I myself am not / happy" (Lattimore 1965:23.266-267). He then mentions Teiresias' oracle about his accomplishing the sacrifice he owed to Poseidon and that "Death will come to me from the sea, in / some altogether unwarlike way and it will end me / in the ebbing time of sleek old age." (*ib.* 1965:23.281-283). This unhappy ending of the legendary affair seems to echo the *Glass*, evocative of human sexuality as an endlessly frustrating process. Still, despite this premonition, "Penelope and Odysseus had enjoyed their lovemaking" (*ib.* 1965:23.300).

When *Gradiva* closed down in 1938, the fragile door was stored by Charles Ratton, a friend and dealer in primitive art. About eighteen months later, Duchamp called on Ratton with Breton and asked that the door be destroyed (Schwarz 1969:505). Since that time, the *Door for Gradiva* was first reproduced in the Paris journal *XXe Siècle*, no. 3 in June 1952. The 1968 replica was made for the exhibition *Doors*, at Cordier & Ekstrom, New York, in that year (19 March - 20 April 1968). Duchamp also designed the poster for the exhibition's announcement, made of paper that folded into the pattern of twin doors. When the simulated doors are opened, a reproduction of Duchamp's 1937 *Door for Gradiva* appears in the centre of the image, where within the twin-figure silhouette are listed the names of all the artists participating in the exhibition. All this effort on the part of Duchamp to revive the 1937 original underlines this work's significance for him.

The Cassandra Connection – The Myth and the Foundation

II.16

Cassandra and her twin brother, Helenus, were among the younger of fifty children of king Priam and queen Hecuba of Troy. According to legend, at their birthday feast, celebrated in the sanctuary of Thymbraeus Apollo, they grew tired of play and fell asleep in a corner, while their forgetful parents, who had drunk too much wine, staggered home without them. Next morning, when they were sober, the parents returned to the temple and found the sacred serpents licking the children's ears. At Hecuba's scream of terror, the serpents at once disappeared into a pile of laurel boughs (Apollodorus 1921:III.49). However, from that moment their ears' sensors were so purified that they could listen to mystical sounds that exist in nature, such as the voices of animals and especially of birds. Cassandra had an immediate relation with animals and could speak like a bird, as mentioned in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (Aeschylus 1926:1050). Yiannis Melanitis represented the divine operation on her ears, including the one that corresponds to the invisible side of her face, as if the serpents were surgical instruments creating fissures on the fine phosphorescent paper. The legend further claimed that Cassandra was so beautiful that she became an object of the god Apollo's desire. She consented to have sex with him on the promise that he would teach her the art of prophecy but, having learnt the prophetic art, she broke her promise. Cassandra referred to this affair in Aeschylus, "Oh, but he struggled to win me, breathing ardent love for me [...] I consented to Loxias [Apollo] but broke my word." (Aeschylus 1926:1206-1208). Apollo was outraged by her rejection, but was unable to take back her prophetic powers. Ultimately, Cassandra agreed to a kiss, as a compromise that she thought would not do any harm. However, Apollo took this opportunity to spit into her mouth, thus cursing her that although she would always tell the truth, no one would ever believe or understand what she said, rendering her prophetic powers worse than useless. "Already I prophesied to my countrymen all their disasters [...] Ever since that fault I could persuade no one of aught." (*ib.* 1926:1210-1213). Her cursed gift from Apollo became a source of endless pain and frustration. Her family and the Trojan people saw her as a liar and a madwoman. Exceptionally, her proclaiming that the shepherd Paris was her brother was believed (a long time ago an oracle had forced his parents to abandon him in the wilderness, but he was saved by shepherds). This incident took place after Paris sought refuge in the altar of Zeus from his brothers' wrath over winning the prize of his own bullock, which resulted in his joyful reunion with his family, despite the curse. However, foreseeing Paris' central role in the destruction of Troy, Cassandra tried to kill him, but he was rescued. According to Professor Robert Graves, embarrassed by Cassandra's criminal intentions and to avoid scandal, Priam built a pyramidal structure



Yiannis Melanitis
(Greece, b. 1967).
Cassandra, 2006.
Ink on Gmund paper,
within plexiglass, 100 x 70.
Athens, GR: The American
College of Greece - ACG Art.



Edward Burne-Jones
(England, 1833-1898).
*Maria Zambaco as
Cassandra*, c. 1867.
Sanguine on paper, 36 x 28.
London, UK: Victoria and
Albert Museum.

upon a tower to confine her (Graves 1955:626). She was accompanied there by the wardress who cared for her under orders to inform the king of all of his daughter's prophetic utterances. Cassandra truly went mad in her pyramid; she attacked her visitors and tore her clothes and hair and refused to eat. She shrieked well into the night, banging on the door and sobbing. Then she slept for six days. When she was finally released, she asked to become a priestess of Athena. Subsequently, when Paris and Aeneas set off for Sparta to kidnap Helen, Paris' promised prize, Cassandra predicted the doom his voyage would cause and Helenus agreed. They were ignored, though and Priam refused to pay any attention to either of his prophetic twins in this matter (*ib.* 1955:635). Cassandra also warned the Trojans about the Greeks hiding inside the *Wooden Horse* (*Aeneid* 2006:2.323). She knew her own and her mother's fate. She prophesied the doom of the Greeks' *nostos* (homecoming) – Agamemnon's death at the hands of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra; their own murder by Orestes; Odysseus' ten-year wanderings before returning to his home. She predicted that her cousin Aeneas would escape during the fall of Troy and found a new nation in Rome. However, she was unable to do anything to forestall these tragedies since no one believed her. At the fall of Troy, Cassandra sought shelter in the temple of Athena and there she was clinging so tightly to the *Palladium* (wooden statue of Athena) in supplication for her protection that the Greek warrior Ajax of Locris knocked it over from its stand as he dragged her away. As if that was not enough, Ajax brutally raped her inside the temple. Athena was furious at the Greeks' failure to penalise Ajax for his crimes in her temple and she gravely punished them with the help of Poseidon and Zeus by sending storms to destroy much of the Greek fleet on their way home from Troy, while ensuring a terrible death for Ajax (Lattimore 1965:4.499-511). Agamemnon then took Cassandra as a concubine to his kingdom in Mycenae. Unbeknown to Agamemnon, while he was away at war, his wife, Clytemnestra, had begun an affair with his cousin, Aegisthus. When Agamemnon returned, the adulterous couple murdered him and Cassandra with a *labrys* (double-headed axe). Upon her death, Cassandra's soul was led to the Elysian Fields, as she was judged worthy enough from her dedication to the gods and her religious nature during her life (Westmoreland 2007:179).



One of the best-known representations of Cassandra is the vase decoration attributed to Kleophrades Painter. The theme of the *Sack of Troy* encircles the vase's shoulder. A detail focuses on Ajax and the cursed prophetess. She kneels next to the *Palladium*. She is represented in a seemingly erotic pose, naked, with a cape tied around her shoulders, her legs spread wide open to reveal her groin and her breasts bare and emphasised by the knot of her cape. One arm is grasping the *Palladium* and the other is

outstretched directly over Ajax's genital area in a gesture of supplication rather than beckoning. Ajax has one hand in her hair and the other hand grasping his outstretched sword, sticking towards Cassandra in an almost phallic stance. Finally, the statue of Athena is facing towards Ajax, her shield and spear drawn as if she were challenging him.

The most evocative modern depiction of Cassandra as a crazy doomsday prophetess is by Edward Burne-Jones. He used as model the Greek beauty Maria Zambaco (1843-1914), who was also his mistress as of 1866 and was recorded to have been "howling like Cassandra" (Oswald and Wahl 1965:685), when in 1869 her lover decided to break with her. Though Duchamp would not be familiar with the relation of Zambaco to Cassandra, her example demonstrates how the Homeric archetype may apply in real life. Cassandra has always been shown in paintings with her long hair tousled in what has been considered lunatic fashion, scantily clad and helpless in the face of her predicted doom. Shakespeare presented her as a madwoman ranting along the walls of Troy in his play *Troilus and Cressida* (1602). However, she was not a madwoman, but rather a tragic heroine who was cursed by the gods for not playing by their rules.

Her name, Cassandra, has an ambivalent meaning. Professor Graves translated it from Greek to mean "she who entangles men" (Graves 1955:747), which is ironic since, although she was stunningly beautiful, her madness repelled most men and her prophecies foretold their ignorant deaths. An enduring archetype, nowadays 'Cassandra' is called someone whose true words are ignored, since her doom was to predict what others refused to believe (Powell 1995:325). Modern invocations of her are most frequently an example of a 'Cassandra complex', a psychological phenomenon in which an individual's accurate prediction of a crisis is

Kleophrades Painter
(Greece, c. 5th BC).
Sack of Troy: Cassandra holds on to the Palladium, beseeching Ajax the Lesser not to harm her, c. 475 BC.
Attic red-figured hydria, H:32.
Naples, IT: Museo Archeologico Nazionale.

ignored or dismissed. To emphasise such a situation, her name is frequently used in fiction when prophecy comes up, especially true prophecy that is not believed.

Cassandra appeared variously in the Homeric epics – as a promised bride (Lattimore 1951:13.366); a visionary seer (*ib.* 1951:24.699); a martyr (Lattimore 1965:11.422). Likewise, she featured in both of Joyce’s masterworks – *Ulysses* (1914-1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1922-1939). While the former openly referred to the *Odyssey*, Professor Nanos Valaoritis found the latter’s theme, *pólemos* (Greek for war), to make it associate with the *Iliad* (Valaoritis 2015:123). Most relevant of all is the mention of Cassandra in the former’s *Nestor* episode, which parallels the part in the *Odyssey* when the young Telemachus goes to seek news of his missing father from Nestor, the aged king of Pylos. Much as Homer satirised Nestor because of his ponderous verbiage, offering Telemachus pointless words, Joyce has his ‘Nestor’ embody everything he is rebelling against – tired clichés and racist comments. After Stephen taught his lesson of history at the Clifton School, he was lectured by the headmaster, Mr Garrett Deasy. The highlight was a letter in which Mr Deasy foresaw the spread of foot and mouth disease in Ireland unless the Irish “take the bull by the horns” (Joyce 1934:2.34), by which he meant vaccine therapy. Therein he begged to be “Pardoned a classical allusion [to] Cassandra” (*ib.* 1934:2.34). Though the idea of Cassandra prophecy was inspired to Joyce by the most devastating outbreak of aphthous fever in Ireland on 30 January 1914, this disease is actually a certain allegory of broader corruption. Ironically, Deasy himself was corrupt since he was portrayed as an anti-Semitic and pro-British Irishman. Being difficult for him to refuse, Stephen agreed to promote Deasy’s letter to his literary friends at the press. The fact of the matter is that Deasy identified with Cassandra emblematising the advent of doom that could be prevented if she was believed. In *Finnegans Wake*, Cassandra was clearly implied in the fall of “The house of Atreox” (Joyce 1939:55.3), while her name was obscurely camouflaged as “Olecasandrum” (*ib.* 1939:124.36), a pun for old Alexandria, which was a prominent Apostolic see. Warfare made sure to sever the heroic lineage of Atreus and Cassandra, while at the same time preserve their names as reference in post-heroic times.

Unlike Joyce, but in the same spirit of appropriation, Duchamp became obsessed with Cassandra as a kindred spirit and made it his aim to associate with her enigma. He had been living primarily in New York since William Nelson Copley (1919-1996) – known to his friends as Bill – met him in 1947. Copley, son of a newspaper tycoon who had amassed the publishing empire known as Copley Press, was a frequent visitor to Du-



Left to right:
Teeny Duchamp,
Richard Hamilton,
Betty Factor,
William N. Copley,
Donald Factor,
Walter Hopps,
Betty Asher,
Marcel Duchamp.
Photographed at Stardust Hotel,
Las Vegas, October 1963.

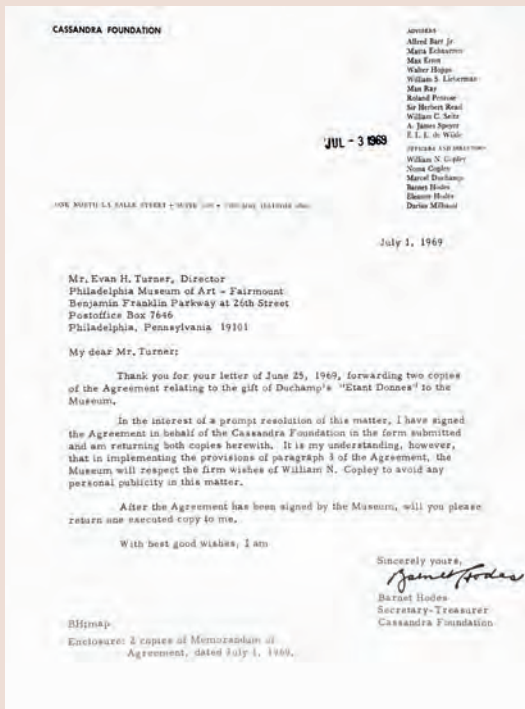
champ’s studio at 210 West 14th Street once he returned to New York City after his years in France. In 1953 Copley married Noma Rathner (née Norma Ratner) and, while in Chicago in 1954, set up the William & Noma Copley Foundation with funds he inherited from his father, to provide artists with small grants for their creative endeavours. The foundation had contemporary artists, including Duchamp, as an advisory board. Duchamp’s input can be surmised from the names of recipients of the awards, many of whom were his closest friends and family members – Hans Bellmer, Joseph Cornell, Richard Hamilton, Duchamp’s stepson Paul Matisse and Isabelle Waldberg (Taylor 2009:130).

The sculptor James Metcalf (1925-2012) cited the fact that Duchamp’s attraction to the idea that Cassandra represented emerged following the production of Euripides’ *Troades* (*The Women of Troy*) at Théâtre Récamier, Paris (Metcalf 2000). Metcalf’s party, including Bill and Noma Copley, the Mexican poet and writer Octavio Paz and Duchamp, attended the production’s opening on 3 November 1961. The performance began with the Mexican actress Pilar Pellicer (1938-2020), who was to become Metcalf’s wife, in the title role, bursting on stage with a flaming torch in each hand, seemingly possessed with prophecy. This scene must have been an epiphany for Duchamp, quite like Roussel’s *Impressions of Africa* play. Later, over dinner, the group discussed the role and fate of Cassandra. Duchamp was well aware of her myth. As seer of unbelievable oracles, Cassandra exerted great appeal on Duchamp. Her pessimistic prophetic pronouncements, which were never believed, tragically always proved true. Duchamp may have associated the Greek myth of Cassandra – who argued that the admission of the *Wooden Horse* offered by the Greeks

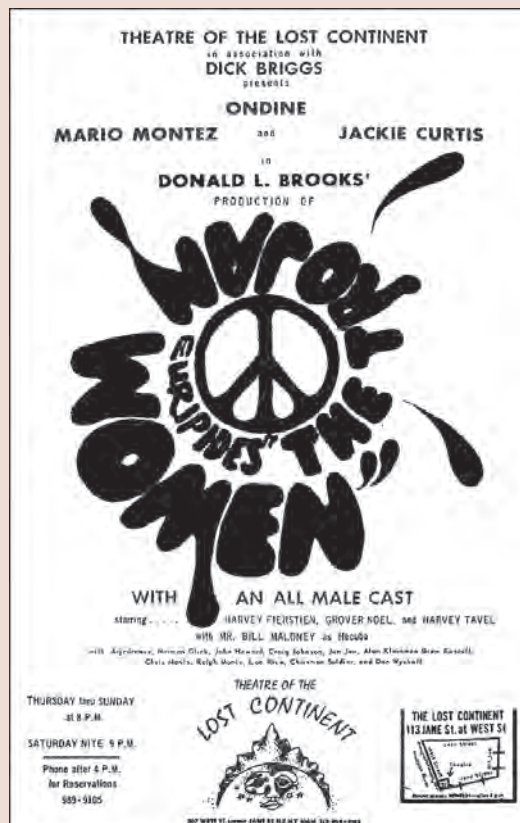


James Metcalf
(USA, 1925-2012). *The Torch of Cassandra*, 1962.
Bronze, 83 x 18 x 24.
Courtesy of Scott Hodes and Maria Bechily Collection, Chicago, IL.

Letter from Barnet Hodes to
Evan H. Turner.
*Memorandum of Agreement between
the Cassandra Foundation and the
Philadelphia Museum of Art,*
1 July 1969.
Reproduced in Taylor 2009:426.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art, Archives.



Copley had been one of the few people who knew that Duchamp was secretly working on his sequel masterwork, after the *Glass*, since 1946. This was *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau / 2° le gaz d'éclairage* (*Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*). It was with his wholehearted support that the Cassandra Foundation purchased *Étant donnés*, as soon as it was completed in 1966 for \$60,000 (Tomkins 1996:433) and on 1 July 1969, soon after the artist's death, agreed to donate it to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where it has been permanently on view since that time.



Donald L. Brooks (USA, ?-2016).
Poster for Euripides *"The Trojan
Women"*, 1971, New York.
Courtesy of the Theatre of
the Lost Continent, New York.

the Lost Continent, New York, with an all male cast including Bill Maloney as Hecuba, Harvey Fierstein as Andromache, Mario Montez as Cassandra, Leo Rice as Helen and Don Wyckoff as Talthybius. Both these versions made use of the more up-to-date and critically acclaimed translation by Edith Hamilton.

would precipitate the fall of Troy – with his own effort to persuade fellow artists to relinquish the yoke of retinal painting, a task that must have appeared hopeless during the height of abstract expressionism (Taylor 2009:135).

Not long after the experience of Euripides' *Troades*, Metcalf made a sculpture called *The Torch of Cassandra*, which was purchased by Barnet Hodes, the Copley Foundation's legal adviser and secretary-treasurer and also lawyer of Duchamp. Some years later, Hodes told Metcalf that because of this sculpture he investigated the story of Cassandra, so that, in 1964, when Duchamp presented the motion to change the name of the foundation to the Cassandra Foundation, he knew why. According to Metcalf, Copley informed him that Noma did not, naturally enough, see why their foundation should be rechristened, especially as her own name would be replaced with that of another woman. Duchamp was waiting in the living room of the couple's New York apartment at 7 West 81st Street, while Bill and Noma engaged in a heated argument over the foundation's proposed name change. After quite a time, "Bill blew a cloud of white cigarette smoke out the door of the bedroom" (Metcalf 2000) and into the adjacent living room to let Duchamp know that his efforts succeeded at last.

The solution to the enigma about the Cassandra Foundation must be sought in the particular scene of the *Troades* that Duchamp experienced in 1961. Unfortunately, there is no visual evidence of that production by Jean Tasso at Théâtre Récamier, which ceased to exist as of 1978. However, this tragedy, based on Homer's *Iliad*, is the greatest pacifist piece of world literature and would have appealed to such a conscientious objector as Duchamp. In its anti-war sensibility, Euripides was a fairly solitary author pushed aside for most of history, because he exposed war as the root of all evil. However, amidst the Cold War (1947-1991) and particularly during the Vietnam War (1955-1975), anti-war and pro-peace movements grew into very large demonstrations in the United States from 1967 until 1971. Therefore, it follows that the year 1971 saw two significant productions of the *Troades* – first, Michael Cacoyannis' film starring American actress Katharine Hepburn as Hecuba, British actors Vanessa Redgrave and Brian Blessed as Andromache and Talthybius, French-Canadian actress Geneviève Bujold as Cassandra and Greek actress Irene Papas as Helen; second, Donald L. Brooks' production at the Theatre of

The stage represents a battlefield, a few days after the ultimate battle, in the dusk of early dawn, before sunrise. In the Cassandra scene, the Greek herald Talthybius, conversing with queen Hecuba informs her, “King Agamemnon chose her [Cassandra] out from all [...] for the king’s own bed at night.” (Euripides 1937:23). To this announcement Hecuba protests, “Oh, never. She is God’s, a virgin, always. / That was God’s gift to her for all her life.” Talthybius adds, “He [Apollo] loved her for that same strange purity [her virgin crown]” (*ib.* 1937:24). Mourningly in response, Hecuba soliloquises on Cassandra, “Throw away, daughter, the keys of the temple. / Take off the wreath and the sacred stole.” (*ib.* 1937:24). Then, observing a burst of light from within the nearby shelter, Talthybius reacts with alarm, fearing the women indoors have decided to burn themselves to death. Hecuba reassures him, “No, no, there is nothing burning. It is my daughter, Cassandra. She is mad.” (*ib.* 1915:27). A moment later, the door opens from within and Cassandra enters, white-robed and wreathed like a priestess, with blazing torch on either hand, dancing to her soft song to herself without noticing the herald or the scene before her, “Lift it high—in my hand—light to bring. / I praise him. I bear a flame. With my torch I touch to fire / this holy place.” (*ib.* 1937:26). Then she continues in extreme irony, “Blessed the bridegroom, / blessed am I / to lie with a king in a king’s bed in Argos.” (*ib.* 1937:27). She then makes a circle round her, waving her torch as though bearing incense and the vision of Apollo appears to her. She dances a bridal song begging, “Honour to him / whose bed fate drives me to share.” (*ib.* 1937:28). In response Hecuba mourns, “O fire, fire, when men make marriages / you light the torch, but this flame flashing here / is for grief only. Child, such great hopes once I had. / I never thought that to your bridal bed / Greek spears would drive you. / Give me your torch. You do not hold it straight, you move so wildly. Your sufferings, my child, / have never taught you wisdom. / You never change. Here! someone take the torch / into the hut. This marriage needs no songs, / but only tears.” (*ib.* 1937:28). In response Cassandra reveals to Hecuba her vision, “If Apollo lives, / my marriage shall be bloodier than Helen’s.” (*ib.* 1937:28) and true intentions, “Agamemnon, the great, the glorious lord of Greece— / I shall kill him” (*ib.* 1937:29). After noticing the scene for the first time, she gently disposes her wreaths and goes out towards Agamemnon’s galley, followed by Talthybius and the soldiers. Not bearing the emotional weight, Hecuba then falls to the ground and refusing the Trojan women’s aid cries without rising, “Daughter, who knew God’s mystery and joy, / what strange chance lost you your virginity?” (*ib.* 1937:34).



Michael Cacoyannis
(Cyprus, 1922-2011).
*Geneviève Bujold as Cassandra in
The Trojan Women, 1971.*
Film drama, 01:45:00.
Athens, GR: Michael Cacoyannis
Foundation.

Replace the context of the Trojan War with the violence over sexual defloration and the Cassandra scene in the *Troades* becomes an allegory of timeless lament of a mother over her child’s loss of self-determination. Importantly, Hecuba is at a loss and has no reasonable advice for the future to offer her mad daughter Cassandra. This sort of pessimism is reflected in Joseph Cornell’s *Bébé Marie* (*Baby Bride*) of the early 1940s, where a found doll buried in a box with weed obviously expresses the loss of innocence. The twigs thoroughly covering the foreground can be perceived as cracked glass, evoking the experience in a child’s life that widens its awareness of evil, pain or suffering in the world around it (Cornell supported Duchamp in creating the *Box in a Valise* of 1941-1942). However, despite her unbearable pain, Hecuba counsels her sensible daughter-in-law with these words, “Life cannot be what death is, child. Death is empty—life has hope.” (*ib.* 1937:41). Indeed, though she was informed that her child with Hector was taken away from her to be executed andromache was allotted to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, whom she accompanied to Epirus and to whom she bore three sons. In her archetypal role as mother, Hecuba strives to preserve whatever might be saved from the war’s total destruction,



Joseph Cornell
(USA, 1903-1972).
Untitled Object - Bébé Marie,
c. 1940-1942.
Papered and painted wooden box,
with painted corrugated cardboard
bottom, containing doll in cloth dress
and straw hat with cloth flowers,
dried flowers and twigs, flecked with
paint, 60 x 32 x 13.
New York, NY: The Museum of
Modern Art.

as a persistent urge of the will to live. A similar kind of hope amidst despair seems to be the subject of Duchamp's *Étant donnés*. It negates the pessimism of the given decay by nature with the optimism of something extra fabricated by man.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Study for *Étant Donnés*:
1° La Chute d'Eau, 2° Le Gaz
d'Éclairage (1946-1966),
c. 1948, New York.
Textured wax and ink on yellow-
toned paper and cut gelatin silver
prints, mounted on board, 43 x 31.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art.



Digital rendering of Cassandra from
the Kleophrades Painter vase.

The *Étant donnés* installation began taking flesh with a set of *Swiss Landscape with Waterfall* photographs, which Duchamp took during a vacation with Mary Reynolds at Bellevue, Switzerland, in August 1946. They were followed by a pencil drawing of a female nude figure inscribed “*Étant donnés: Maria, la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage / Marcel Duchamp / Dec. 47*” (Given: Maria, the Waterfall and the Illuminating Gas / Marcel Duchamp / Dec. 1947). The title, excluding the naming, appeared in Notes 92, 98, 100, 101 and 124 of the years 1911-1915, published in *The Green Box* (1934). Duchamp told Schwarz that the figure in *Étant donnés* was that of the Bride in the *Glass*, finally unclothed and treated in *trompe-l'œil* fashion (Schwarz 1996:794). The model for the nude body, which appears in all works relating to *Étant donnés* is ascertained to be the artist Maria Martins (1894-1973), the wife of the Brazilian Ambassador to the United States, with whom Duchamp fell passionately in love in 1943 (this affair came to an abrupt end when in the autumn of 1951 he once again met Alexina ‘Teeny’ Matisse, whom he had first met in Paris in 1923 as Alexina Sattler). The subsequent study for *Étant donnés*, a cut-out drawing on a photo-collage ground, presents the same figure as a *maenad*, female follower of Dionysus into a state of ecstatic frenzy through a combination of dancing and intoxication. She poses against wild nature, including waterfall in a series of cascades, with one foot in the air and an arm stretched out behind a jagged cypress tree that grows like an erect phallus before her. That awkward pose, unabashedly

exposing her sex, resembles Cassandra in the rape scene on the Kleophrades Painter vase. The same pose was rendered as a life-size plaster that Duchamp cast from the body of Martins, following recent lessons in sculpting with Ettore Salvatore (1902-1990). Soon thereafter, as photographs from 1959 attest, the plaster figure was captured foreshortened, suggesting its new position as reclining on the ground, becoming conventional femininity. Finally, having mastered the technique of binding books in leather, Duchamp chose to cover the parts that were visible from the peepholes in the installation's exterior door with cow skin (*peau de vache*) for heightening as much as possible the sensuality of naturalism.

What is more, the *tableaux vivant* (French for living picture) that Duchamp eventually called *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage* (Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas) was probably inspired after a macabre scene. In his critical study entitled *Given, 1° Art, 2° Crime: Modernity, Murder and Mass Culture*, Jean-Michel Rabaté aimed to link avant-garde art with the aesthetics of crime (Rabaté 2007:38). His point of departure was the visual parallel between the nude figure at the core of *Étant donnés* and a crime-scene photograph of a young woman. The particular victim was Elizabeth Short, who had received the nickname ‘Black Dahlia’ in 1946 as wordplay on the film noir murder mystery, *The Blue Dahlia*, released in April that year. She was found mutilated, her body sliced in half at the waist, in Leimert Park, Los Angeles, California, on 15 January 1947, aged 22. At the time Duchamp was on a transatlantic liner returning to the United States from France (Taylor 2009:197). However, it is possible, as Mark Nelson and Sarah Hudson Bayliss speculate in their book *Exquisite Corpse: Surrealism and the Black Dahlia*, that crime-scene photographs and newspaper articles were given to Duchamp by Man Ray,



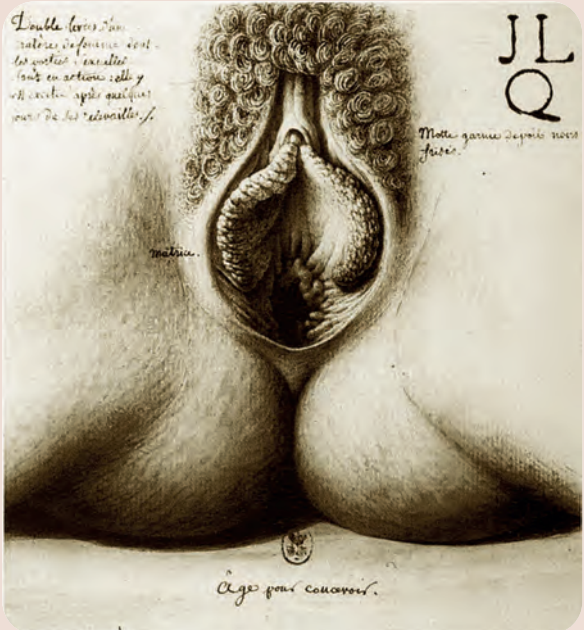
Marcel Duchamp, *Étant donné* : *Étant donné. C'est-à-dire l'un, 2 le pas d'Idéalisme*, 1946
 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York ; ADAGP Paris ; Succession Marcel Duchamp

Photographie de la police de Los Angeles : cadavre d'Elizabeth Short, 17 janvier 1947.

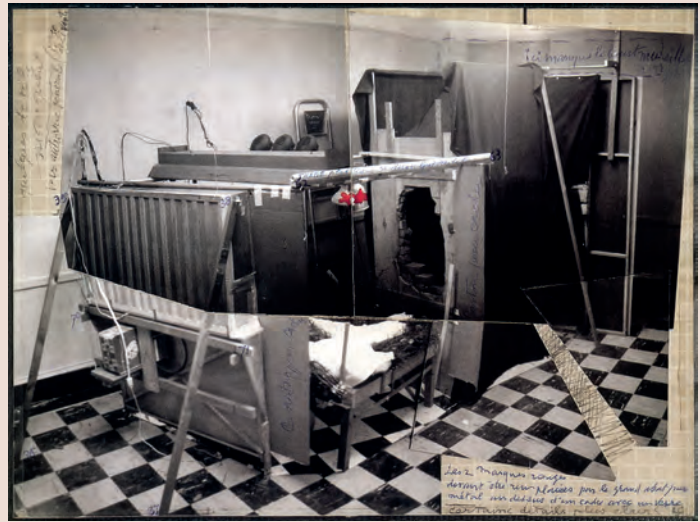
Duchamp's *Étant Donnés* (1946-1966) and Los Angeles Police Department's photograph of the corpse of Elizabeth Short (1947), published in Jean-Michel Rabaté's *Étant Donnés : 1^o l'Art, 2^o le Crime*, 108-109:2010.

with Copley acting as intermediary (Nelson and Bayliss 2006:138), which led to the first recorded sketch of *Étant donnés*, dated December 1947. According to Steve Hodel, a former homicide detective in the Los Angeles Police Department, his father George Hodel, a prominent physician with surgical skills and an amateur photographer, was acquainted with and greatly admired Man Ray and “the two men were known to socialise in Los Angeles in the 1940s, sharing a passion for Sadean orgies, violent sexual fantasies and other forms of libertine behaviour and illicit activities” (Taylor 2009:195). Apparently, Hodel suggested that his father murdered Short, with whom he was intimately involved, in an act of vengeful retribution after she refused his offer of marriage (Hodel 2003:88).

It is likely that Duchamp, who had a fascination for trivia and found objects conjoined with his iconoclasm as an anti-artist, became interested in the horrific Black Dahlia crime and took the opportunity to use the position of the corpse as model in his last masterwork with an aim to turn it into a monument of sorts. He seems to be actuating what Georges Bataille wrote, “Essentially, the domain of eroticism is the field of



Jean-Jacques Lequeu (France, 1757-1825). *Age for Conception - Series of Lascivious Figures*, 1779-1795. Ink wash, 17 x 16. Paris, FR: Bibliothèque Nationale de France. | Digital rendering of Duchamp's *Étant Donnés* (1946-1966).



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Overhead view of the figure in *Étant Donnés* (1946-1966) reclining on bed of branches, twigs and leaves. Published in *Marcel Duchamp: Étant Donnés*, 2009:240. | Marcel Duchamp (ib.). Photocollage from the inside front cover of the *Manual of Instructions*, 1966. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art - Gift of the Cassandra Foundation.

violence, the area of the violation” (Bataille 1989:23). In doing so, however, he seems to appropriate yet another Homeric motif – that of Cassandra, as his insistence to rename the Copley Foundation suggests. Nanos Valaoritis wrote, “The *Étant donnés* figure may be the prophetess Cassandra awake with open legs ready to be raped by barbaric Achaeans... or asleep ready to be licked by serpents as in cunnilingus. Anything is possible.” (in an email to the author dated 19 October 2015). The homophony in Cassandra’s evocation of ‘Hymen’ as god of marriage and the membrane that partially covers the external vaginal opening, would have appealed to Duchamp as a pun. The breach in the wall, through which the viewer peeps in the nude, is evocative of the broken hymen that is traditionally taken to be an indicator of defloration. This sexual condition may be an allegory that the Fall of Troy was followed by an outbreak of violence on every level – physical, mental and emotional.

Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Hand Reflection*, 1948. Pencil on paper with collage of a circular mirror covered by a circular cutout of black paper, mounted under plexiglass, 24 x 17. Paris, FR: Private Collection.

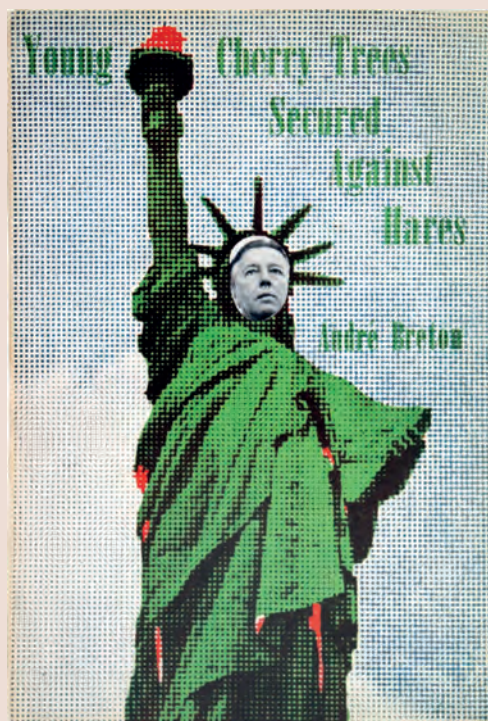


The fact that Duchamp’s relationship to Martins was illicit may also attest to his choice of leaving the head out from the composition in every study. At the same time, the characteristics of the actual figure as seen behind the stage – the lack of all its limbs, but the left arm ending in a hand and the displacement of its head covered with hair seen from the rear – resemble the Black Dahlia’s dismemberment. Ultimately, however, the headless body evokes the murdered body of Cassandra based on the mythological fact that Clytemnestra decapitated her with a *labrys* (axe), the same implement she used to take revenge of Agamemnon. In that case *Étant donnés* conflates two of history’s most unjust criminal cases, those of Cassandra and the Black Dahlia. The theatrical environment in which Duchamp placed the nude, whose elements (twigs, branches, autumnal leaves against the photo-collage backdrop) he scrupulously staged and carefully lit over a chessboard floor, during a period of 20 years from 1946 to 1966, brings to mind a parody of the Elysian Fields to which Cassandra’s soul was led.

If the *Étant donnés* figure is indeed Cassandra, then her whole essence must be sought in the only vital part left to her otherwise inactive body – the left arm holding aloft an electric light that is supposed to be a Bec Auer gas lamp. Duchamp focused on this part in his early drawing *Hand Reflection* of 1948, where the figure’s hand is holding a light fixture that is closer to a blazing torch of the kind that Cassandra wields in Euripides’ *Troades*. She dances to a song in extreme irony, best conveyed by Professor Gilbert Murray’s translation, “Blessèd is he that shall wed, / And blessèd, blessèd am I / In Argos: a bride to lie / With a king in a king’s bed. / Hail, O Hymen red, / O Torch that makest one! [./] I am the Bride of Desire: / Therefore my torch is borne—” (Euripides 1915:28). It is a fact that Cassandra addresses her blazing torch ambivalently as Hymen, the god of marriage. Consequently, Hymen is at the same time the sign of both wedding and funeral, of sunrise and consuming fire (ib. 1915:84). It thus follows that the part of the torch meant to be the source of light at its brightest is here occupied by a circular mirror that is fully covered by black felt. It has been a time-honoured tradition in the West, including Greece (Megas 1939:170), to drape the mirror at home from the moment of death through the seven or so days of mourning. The reason is that people focus on the deceased

and avoid all appearances of vanity while in mourning. The mirror is an expression of vanity and should not be used in a house of mourning. The drape is like a barrier between the dead and the living. The draped mirror is a practice of dual significance – for the living to bear the burden of remembering and for the dead to let go of their memories, so they can forget the beauty of their lives and move on into that other realm. This mourning custom is a gesture with a curious ambivalence – a way of honouring the dead and making a fresh start without them. In Duchamp's work, the gravest reason of mourning is war. It seems then that *Étant donnés* (1946-1966) mourns via Cassandra the Second World War, just like *Fresh Widow* (1920) mourns via Penelope the First World War.

With reference to Cassandra, the archetypal and total victim of war, Duchamp throws the *Étant donnés* figure's sex flat and straightforward on the viewer's face, but at the same time makes sure to raise her gentle hand beyond her fleshiness, holding aloft the Bec Auer, keeping the emblematic fire of the spirit alive. This recalls the Socratic distinction between attachment to carnal *eros* (love) and spiritual desire of *Kalon* (Beauty), as described in Plato's *Symposium* (see pp 13-14). With *Étant donnés*, Duchamp seems to be making a monument to corporeal *thanatos* (death) culminating in spiritual light as emblematic of Cassandra's deliverance from the burdens of the flesh. The Hymen of Cassandra then would seem to relate to the highest and most crucial detail of Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi's *Statue of Liberty* (1886) – the blazing torch. The whole majestic statue was a gift to the United States from the people of France, following the Union's victory in the Civil War in 1865, in order to honour the achievement of freedom for all people from slavery. The figure is Libertas, the Roman goddess of freedom, who stands as an anthropomorphic lighthouse, aiming to enlighten the New World with her torch. Commissioned to illustrate the cover of André Breton's 1946 volume of poetry *Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares*, Duchamp conflated Libertas with the author. The comic title, discovered by chance in a horticultural catalogue (Polizzotti 1995:518), alluded to Breton's rising above the painful fact of losing his wife, Jacqueline Lamba, to the sculptor David Hare, whose affair from 1943 led to their marriage in 1945. In all these cases, the blazing torch held at the uppermost level serves as a symbol of enlightenment, emblematising the triumph of spirit over matter.



The proposed right arm and torch of Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi's *Statue of Liberty* (1886), on display at the Centennial Exposition, 1876, Philadelphia. Washington, DC: Library of Congress. | Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Cover for André Breton's *Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares*, 1946. Published by View Editions, New York. Antwerp, BE: Ronny van de Velde.

At a special meeting, on 30 November 1967, the Board of Directors of the Cassandra Foundation resolved to present awards of \$2,000 each to eleven individuals in recognition of their past achievements in the field of art. Among the recipients was the magician-philosopher James Lee Byars (1932-1997), the author of *3 in Pants* (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 30/11/1967). This was evidence that the recently rechristened foundation with such an enigmatic designation gave the much-needed chance to support slippery figures of Duchampian conceptual strand. Owing to Duchamp's vision, it is clear that the ancient Cassandra, who could overcome intellectual blindness and see beyond physical sight with the third eye of her mind, was given new life and brought up to date through such a foundation for the arts.

II.17

Souvenirs from the Classical World

Unlike most of the great German philhellènes – Goethe, Hegel, Hölderlin, Lessing, Schiller and Winckelmann – who never visited Greece because the ancient were no match to modern Greeks, in the last decade of his life, Duchamp chose to have a travelling spree to the cradle of Western civilisation. The entry in *Ephemerides* for 1 September 1960 records that, “having spent July and August on the western shores of the Mediterranean, Marcel and Teeny Duchamp left Cadaqués to travel eastwards. From Venice they planned to sail in the Adriatic and through the Corinth Canal to Piraeus, where they would change ships and join Duchamp’s sister, Suzanne, to explore Crete, Rhodes and Hydra.” (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 1/9/1960).



Nick S. Stournaras (Greece). Recto: *View of Athens from Lycabettus Hill*, c. 1960. | Verso: Nicolas Calas’ message to Marcel and Teeny Duchamp, 11 August 1960, Athens. Villiers-sous-Grez, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives.

The Marcel Duchamp Archives in Villiers-sur-Gréuz, France, hold a postcard from the Greek-American art critic Nicolas Calas (1907-1988) to the Duchamp couple, dated 11 August 1960, which is inscribed in French, “My dear friends, I am catching the airplane to return to New York today after having won my case. I hope for you that it may not be as warm in Spain as it is in Greece. I have asked my friend Nanos Valaoritis, Greek surrealist poet, freshly expelled from the group [Valaoritis considered this point misunderstood], to come and see you at the [Grande Bretagne] hotel on September 17 [1960]. He is extremely sympathetic etc. etc. I have read the recent polemic of [Alain] Jouffroy - Breton - [Georges] Mathieu. I believe that you as well [have read it]. So long will we meet again, Nico Calas”. From this message two conclusions are drawn that are interesting. First, the expulsion of Jouffroy from the movement of Surrealism in the early 1960s, for the second time since 1948 (Polizzotti 1995:618), reveals that André Breton continued to behave authoritatively even towards the end of his life, although his victims retained their respect for him. Second, that Calas, who had joined the surrealist movement of Breton since 1934, was the one who introduced Duchamp to Professor Nanos Valaoritis (1921-2019). During his period in France (1954-1960), Valaoritis attended philological lectures at the Sorbonne and particularly engaged with the study of the Mycenaean language. At the same time, he joined Surrealism and wrote works that gave the movement new life. Returning to Athens in 1960, he was to become Surrealism’s most vital organisational force in Greece.

Duchamp, his wife Teeny and his sister Suzanne arrived in Piraeus from Venice on 12 September 1960. The group’s itinerary, as documented in the aforementioned archives, records a tour of the islands especially Crete (Knossos, Malia, Gournia, Kritsa and Dikti) in the first four days, a stay in Athens four days from 17 to 20 September, a travel to the Peloponnese, including Olympia, for three days and a further stay in Athens another four days from 24 to 27 September, after which they flew by plane to Paris. Indeed, as Calas’ message stated, on 17 September Valaoritis met Duchamp and his folks at the Grand Bretagne Hotel. They dined at the *Bacchus* tavern at the foot of the Acropolis, which Valaoritis chose so that his friends would appreciate the harmonious coexistence of antiquity and contemporary life. Duchamp, with his wife, visited the poet in his Kolonaki apartment at 21 Patriarchou Ioakeim Street. There, Valaoritis demonstrated for them his latest invention, the *Nanoscope*. This was a Filmosto Primasix projector, which created alternating shapes and colours on the wall caused from the passage by hand over the lens of a crumpled polarising filter. At its sight, Duchamp exclaimed, “This would interest my brother Jacques Villon”, which was typical of his personally disinterested attitude. Moreover, Valaoritis also showed him the paintings that he created in the period of Paris, which Duchamp described as *faux naïf* (imitating naivety).

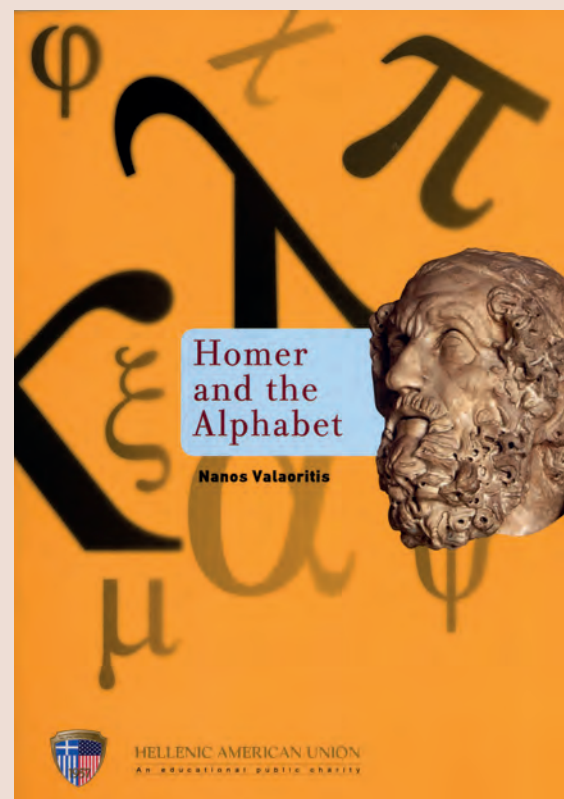


From left to right:
Suzanne,
Teeny and Marcel Duchamp
with the guide Timoleon
Dimopoulos
on the Acropolis, against the
Propylaea, looking at the
Parthenon, 17-20 September 1960.
Silver print on paper, 9 x 14.
Villiers-sous-Grez, FR:
Marcel Duchamp Archives.

Upon chatting, Valaoritis was pleased to find that Duchamp knew and appreciated the Classics, although he did not share such an orientation. He recalled that Guillaume Apollinaire and Francis Picabia in fact admired antiquity and responded to it with a feel for humour, irony and paradox. It should be noted that Apollinaire began the cubist poem *Zone* of 1913 with the verse “À la fin tu es las de ce monde ancien” (You are tired at last of this old world), but in fact he admired antiquity objectively. Duchamp was likewise interested in the modernisation of myths with a similar disposition. When Valaoritis brought up Breton’s bias against Greece, Duchamp said, “Yes, strange, because there is something Grecian about his thought – it combines intellectuality with expressiveness.” In fact, Breton revealed that he had an anticlassical attitude and refused Greece. He lamented the fact that France had been conquered spiritually by the Greeks and militarily by the Romans. He promoted a Celtic nationalism. For instance, in his magazine *Le Surréalisme, Même* he presented an article on Celtic coins that made propaganda for Celts with a Breton origin. At the same time, however, it is worth noting that Breton had recognised the importance of the Hellenistic poet Lycophron of Chalcis (3rd BC). His great poem entitled “Alexandra” was published in part in the *Surrealist Almanac of the Half Century* in 1950, translated by Gérard Legrand. In this poem Alexandra, known to mortals as Cassandra, prophesied what evils would happen to the Trojans because of Paris. The poem contains many rare versions of geographical and mythological names so that in many points it becomes so elusive, harsh and tricky as to discourage readers. Indeed, the Byzantine commentator of Lycophron, Ioannes Tzetzes (c. 1110-1180), claimed that the name “Nanos” (Lycophron 2010:1242-1244), meaning dwarf and referring to a man of ideal small size for wandering, was the name given by the Etruscans to Odysseus (Briquel 1984:150-160), who is described as short in the *Iliad* (Lattimore 1951:3.193) and the *Odyssey* (Lattimore 1965:6.229). The name “Alexandra” that the gods used for Cassandra, a Greek compound of *alexein* (to avert) *ton andra* (the man), declared her will to avoid men’s advances, as a virgin dedicated to serving as priestess of Apollo. Certainly, Cassandra held particular significance for Duchamp as in 1964 he eagerly insisted and managed to rename the William & Noma Copley Foundation into Cassandra (see II.16). Interestingly, Valaoritis wrote the surrealist poem *Allegorical Cassandra*, in which she, stripping bare to wisdom as pattern-shadow-silhouette (Valaoritis 1998:17), prophesied that the earth would be fatally scarred from the clutches of the sky (*ib.* 1998:24), which describes an allegory for the Trojan War.

What is more, it excited Valaoritis that figures such as Comte de Lautréamont had memorised Homer (Rochon 1971). His personal everlasting interest in Homer led to the publication in 2010 of *Homer and the Alphabet: A Study in Thematic Acrophony*, in which he analysed how the two Homeric epics were written using the Greek alphabet as a structural, rhetoric and symbolic thread

Nanos Valaoritis
(Switzerland, b. 1921).
Cover of *Homer and the Alphabet:
A Study in Thematic Acrophony*
(2010).
Athens, GR: Hellenic American
Union, 2012.



Gianfranco Baruchello
(Italy, b. 1924).
Marcel Duchamp crouching in front
of a colossal Siren in the Sacro Bosco dei
Mostri, Bomarzo, 12-20 June 1964.
Silver print on paper, 20 x 30.
Rome, IT: Fondazione Baruchello.



that is shared by both poems. Based on a method of thematic acrophony, using words whose initial sounds are represented by the Greek alphabet's respective letters, the poet chose words that begin with the letter of each book in order to draw up its main topic that contributes to the unfolding of the plot (Valaoritis 2012:22). This enabled him to discern the geometric symmetry that characterises both epics.

Owing to Valaoritis' expertise on Homeric discourse, it is important that he acknowledged the value of this study's argument, about the relation of the *Glass*' Bride and the Bachelors with the *Odyssey*'s Penelope and the suitors. In his opinion, such an analysis has a metaphoric character and does not necessarily require any further convincing evidence. However, though the *Glass*' interpretation through the *Odyssey* is interesting and valid, it must be admitted that its interpretations are at the same time manifold since they depend on its recipients. Surely this interpretation contrasts with or complements other interpretations, Valaoritis claimed, but this is the character of the poeticality of art. In this respect, Calas was right to found his poetic theory on enigma, claiming that art is a kind of riddle to be solved by both the artist-Sphinx who poses it and the spectator-Oedipus who confronts it and that the dialectic of concealing and revealing is a kind of mindful transfiguration (Calas & Calas 1971:341-342; Calas 1942). For Calas, "[Duchamp] IS... the enigma of the Sphinx." (Calas 1945:20).

On another occasion, owing to his exhibition at the Galleria Schwarz, Milan, 5 June to 30 September 1964, Duchamp took the opportunity to visit Italy. His recent close friend, the artist Gianfranco Baruchello (b. 1924), took the opportunity to guide him through places of interest. One of these was Il Sacro Bosco dei Mostri (The Sacred Grove of the Monsters), a manneristic monumental complex located in Bomarzo, in the province of Viterbo, Italy. The gardens were created during the 16th century. It is composed out of a wood located at the bottom of a valley beneath the castle of Orsini and populated by sculptures and small buildings among the natural vegetation. The grove's name stems from the many larger-than-life imaginary creatures, some sculpted in the bedrock, which populate the landscape. It is the work of Pier Francesco Orsini, called Vicino (1523-1585), a patron of the arts, as homage to his beloved wife Giulia Farnese, following her passing in 1560. The sculptures are attributed to Simone Moschino (1553-1610). Perhaps at Duchamp's request, Baruchello photographed him before the colossal figure of the *Siren* towering from her bifurcated tail, one of a pair, of which the other preserves her wings (Franklin 2011:154). Though this photograph is but a snapshot, it nevertheless records one more instance of Duchamp relating to the Homeric traces scattered all over the Classical world.





3.



**A Homeric Exegesis of
Duchamp's *Glass* via
Joyce's *Ulysses***

III

III.1

Duchamp's *Glass* and its Relation to Homer's *Odyssey*

Asked by Cloyd Head from the radio station WMAQ (We Must Ask Questions) what he thinks of his *Bride*, Duchamp answered as follows.

I love it. I'll tell you why. Because that was a real departure from any influence in my case. If you want to be yourself, you say, "Well, this [shows] some influence that I don't like to see." In this case, there was no influence. But if you want to see an influence, I'll tell you how it was done. It was Cranach [the Elder] and Böcklin. I was spending three months in Munich when I did it. Already the idea had come into my mind to paint [...] I was painting and I went to the [Alte] Pinakothek in Munich every day. I love those Cranachs, I love them. Cranach, the old man. The tall nudes. [The] nature and substance of his nudes inspired me for the flesh colour, there. At the same time, I went to [Basel] in Switzerland and studied Böcklin. In Böcklin I found that reaction against – what I call – physical painting, which I already had [the] idea of reacting against, which Impressionism, Pointillism, [and] Fauvism emphasised. I wanted to react against retinal painting and that was my first [try]. (Sawelson-Gorse 1993:100).

The official dates for the *Glass* are 1915-1923, a period spanning eight years. In truth, however, the conception emerged with preparatory plans for this work in the summer of 1912, when Duchamp went to Munich and created the first drawing on the theme of the *Glass*, entitled *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors*, still without the terminal adverb *même* (*Even*). This led to the related *Jura-Paris Road* notes, written shortly after his October 1912 automobile trip. Actual work on the *Glass* began in New York in 1915. The *Glass* reached a stage of 'definitive incompleteness' by February 1923, at which point Duchamp abandoned it and declared to retire early from art. Before returning to Paris, he signed the *Glass* and left it with its owner, Katherine S. Dreier. The *Glass* first appeared to the public in 1926 at the *International Exhibition of Modern Art* that the Société Anonyme organised at the Brooklyn Museum. In 1931, when Dreier took the work out of storage she discovered that both its upper and lower parts were accidentally shattered in transit to her West Redding barn in Connecticut. When Dreier brought herself to tell Duchamp of the disaster, he accepted the breakage as a kind of 'chance completion'. Five years later, in 1936, Duchamp spent some months painstakingly mending it, finally encasing each panel in two further glass panels, mounted in a wood and steel frame. When the *Glass* was restored, Duchamp deemed it 'completed' and displayed it prominently in the library of Dreier's residence, The Haven. Given that it spans 24 years towards completion, more than a third of the author's life (81 years), the *Glass* falls into that special category of masterpieces that are created over great length of time as a lifework. From this point of view, the *Glass* is comparable to its romantic predecessor, *The Suitors* (1852-1898), which preoccupied Gustave Moreau for 46 years, the greater part of his life (72 years) and was left nearly finished at his death. Subsequently, it was exhibited once more, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the period 1943-1944. In 1953 it joined the Arensberg Collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania. Its frail condition has deprived it from the prospect of travelling and the *Glass* is permanently displayed there. Duchamp sanctioned two replicas of the *Glass* for exhibitions - the first at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, in 1961; the other for the Tate Gallery, London, in 1966. The third replica was created for the University of Tokyo, Komaba, in 1980.

Marylin Katz is the first known academic to refer from the literary viewpoint to a conceptual relation between Homer's *Penelope* and Duchamp's *Bride*, yet without reference to Joyce. Considering the fact that Penelope's *kleos* (glory) is never fully stabilised, Katz compared her to Duchamp's *Bride on the Glass* – "elusive and indecipherable, suspended in an unknowability that is only imperfectly resolved" (Katz 1991:194). This is a rather amazing comparison, taking into consideration that Katz's book is a classic discourse with exclusive focus on the Homeric text. Still, however, it provides a fine starting point for the present study. On the other hand, Duchamp would identify with Odysseus per se, as a case of an antihero who eventually manages to emerge victorious having learned from experience – lust of flesh (see III.9); indulgence in drugs (see III.8) and abuse of power (see III.12). Therefore, both male and female protagonists of the *Odyssey* would serve as models for Duchamp's *Glass*.

However, Duchamp seems to be attracted by the *Odyssey's* narrative as well. Working on the theme of *Bride and Bachelors*, he appears to offer a dadaist reading of the relation between Penelope and her suitors. The subject of a single female haunted by a great number of male contenders brings effortlessly to mind Penelope as the most famous widowed bride of all time and the suitors as candidates for marriage to the former wife of Ithaca's late King. With the *Glass* Duchamp is the first visual artist to make an intelligent and conceptual appropriation of this Homeric epic. Before him, visual art inspired by the *Odyssey* had an optical appeal that feasted the eye. By his iconoclastic means, Duchamp responded to Homeric subjects on a mental basis, in the wake of similar trends in avant-garde literature (see I.3-4). The preparatory plans

of such a take on the *Odyssey* began in 1912, which is one year after Cavafy wrote *Ithaca* (1911) and the work was indefinitely abandoned in 1923, which is one year after the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's *Wasteland* (1922). Especially with *Ulysses* the academic world received a lasting blow, which may as well be described as 'antiacademic' or 'antiepistemological'. In the case of Duchamp, the *Glass* seems to appropriate especially the *Odyssey's* Book 21, which deals with the challenge that Penelope set for her suitors. Duchamp succeeded in taking that Book and making it his own. Dealing with the failure of the Bachelors to secure the Bride, it seems he is citing the Homeric situation, whereby no suitor is good enough to deserve Penelope. He represents in the *Glass* the ancient drama enacted by inhuman protagonists of the modern machinist age. Significantly, he is not known to have made any particular reference to the *Odyssey* as such, but this is no reason to exclude an obvious association. Indeed, it is of particular significance that Richard Hamilton, who was obsessed about Duchamp and created the Tate's replica of the *Glass*, was preoccupied with imaging *Ulysses* from 1947 to 1998.

Besides the speculation that Duchamp's *Glass* appropriated the *Odyssey's* Book 21, there is additional, rather solid, evidence that the entire Homeric epic of the *Odyssey* was the *Glass's* source of inspiration. This evidence relates to the sacred number three. According to the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras (c. 570- c. 495 BC), the number three, which forms the basis of the multifarious triad, is the noblest of all digits, as "it is the only number to equal the sum of all the terms below it and the only number whose sum with those below equals the product of them and itself" (Hemenway 2005:53-54). Of course, whole systems of theology, theories of logic and schools of philosophy have been constructed upon a trinitarian foundation. Nonetheless, Trinitarianism is consolidated for the first time in Homer's *Odyssey* and it is via this work that it was appropriated in Jarry's *Faustroll* (see I.3), Roussel's *Impressions of Africa* (see I.4) and, as will be demonstrated below, Duchamp's *Glass* and Joyce's *Ulysses*.

In its different manifestations, as numerical or adjectival designation, the number three occurs at least 60 times in the ancient Homeric text and by 118 times more in the modern Greek translation by Nikos Kazantzakis. It is worth referring to the most significant cases in which the number three is used in the text. First, is the *dolos* (trickiness) and *metis* (wiliness) of Penelope, that "for three years she was secret in her design", which is thrice-repeated in the epic (Lattimore 1965:2.106; 19.151; 24.141). The other cases relate to threefold meaningful actions in the narrative – "three times [Odysseus] brought wine [to the Cyclops] and three times he drained it" (*ib.* 1965:9.360-363); "three times [Odysseus] started toward [Antikleia's soul] and three times she fluttered" (*ib.* 1965:11.206-208); "three times [Telemachus] made [the bow] vibrate and three times he gave over the effort" (*ib.* 1965:21.125-126). Moreover, the multiples of 3 (that is 6, 9, 12, 18, 24, 60, 108 and 300) also occur a total of 68 times in the same text. It is worth noting the utter absence of the number three from the *Odyssey's* Books 1, 7, 16, 22 and 23, which indicates that it was used wisely rather than recklessly.

[THE END]

Trieste-Zurich-Paris, 1914-1921.

Colophon in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). New York, NY: Random House, 1934.

The linking of the number three with the Trinitarianism of Christianity, including that of the Rosicrucian movement, to which Duchamp adhered (Hopkins 1998:190), has been raised in Dada's polemic against religion. However, the fact that literary works of great appeal to Duchamp appropriated to varying degrees Homer's *Odyssey*, suggests a rather more original source for it. The citation frequency of the number three's various manifestations in the following works is telling – 59 times in Jarry's *Faustroll* (1911); 148 times in Roussel's *Impressions of Africa* (1910); 284 times in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). Significantly, in *Ulysses's* colophon Joyce commemorated the three cities – Trieste, Zurich and Paris – in which this work materialised. Such a factual reference to *tripolis* (Greek for three cities), seems to obliquely echo the etymology of Troy, whose name recalls the fact that this city was inhabited by three races – Dardanians, Ilians and Teucrians (Valaoritis 2012:146). Another work obsessed with the number three is Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, of which Duchamp's personal library held a copy (Décimo 2002:108). This work's reference to three – divided into three *canticles* (psalms), each consisting of 33 *cantos* (songs) and composed of *tercets* (three lines) – was Dante's homage to the Christian Trinity. Although Dante had no direct familiarity with Homer's poetry (it wasn't translated and Dante didn't read Greek), he knew of its significance from references in Virgil's *Aeneid*, modelled after the Homeric epics – employing the *Odyssey* as a model (Books I-VI); connected to the *Iliad* (Books VII-XII). The *Aeneid* is further divided into three parts – Dido in Carthage, including a flashback to the fall of Troy (Books I-IV); the Trojans' arrival in Italy and Aeneas' trip to the underworld where he sees the future of Rome (Books V-VIII) and the war in Italy and Aeneas' triumph over Turnus (Books IX-XII). Motivated by antiquity, Dante has Virgil introduce Homer as *poeta sovrano* (sovereign poet), walking ahead of Horace, Ovid and Lucan (Dante 1914:IV.88). Therefore, Dante's *The Divine Comedy* evidences the fact that the Christian doctrine of Trinitarianism is intellectually rooted in Homerism.

What is more, the number three and its multiples also inspired Picabia to call his Dada review “391”, which he launched in Barcelona in January 1917 (Allan 2011). Although 391 was a means by which to fight bourgeois conservatism and revolutionise art, Greek mythology – especially Tritons and nymphs – was prominent amongst the varied sources that Picabia appropriated to achieve his aim. Following this trend, the number three features 9 times on Duchamp’s *Glass*, as follows. On the one hand, manifestly with the following elements – the 3 *Gilled Cooler isolating plates*; the 3 x 3 *Shots*; the 3 x 3 *Malic Molds*; the 3 *Capillary Tubes* for each malic form; the 3 *Rollers* that grind chocolate; the 3 *Oculist Witnesses*; the *Three Draft Pistons*. On the other hand, intentionally with the following invisible elements – the *Three Crashes* that create the *Splash* and the *trismegistus Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity*, who also has three feet (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30).

Harriet and Sidney Janis first noted the inclination of Duchamp’s works to fall “into categories of threes, intentionally or otherwise” (Janis and Janis 1945). The number three was very important to Duchamp and had a special appeal for him; both his writings and art display recurrent manifestations of triplicity. Duchamp acknowledged the importance of “the numb. 3. taken as a refrain in duration – (numb. is mathematical duration.” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30). He was quite conscious of his use of triplication. “The number three interested me because I used it as a kind of architecture for the *Glass*”, he said, adding, “it gave the *Glass* some kind of unitary organisation, at least, as far as its technical elaboration was concerned.” (Schwarz 1969:128). When Schwarz asked the reason for his predilection for this number, he commented, “For me it is a kind of magic number, but not magic in the ordinary sense.” (*ib.* 1969:128). As he explained to Cabanne, “It’s always the idea of ‘amusement’ which causes me to do things and repeated three times... For me the number three is important, but simply from the numerical, not the esoteric, point of view: one is unity, two is double and three is the rest. When you’ve come to the word three, you have three million – it’s the same thing as three. I had decided that the things would be done three times in order to obtain what I wanted.” (Cabanne 1971:47). Therefore, for Duchamp, three is an ultimate number summing up everything, the final end of numeration, what Jarry perceived as “the undefined, which commences at three, [...] the indeterminate [...], the Universe, which may be defined as the Several” (Jarry 1965:75). Ternary multiplicity was also a constant procedure in his broader working method. Duchamp’s *The Green Box* of 1934 contained 93 loose sheets and was issued in 300 copies. His *Boîte-en-Valise (Box in a Suitcase)* of 1935-1940 contained 69 miniature replicas and the wooden version was issued in 300 copies.



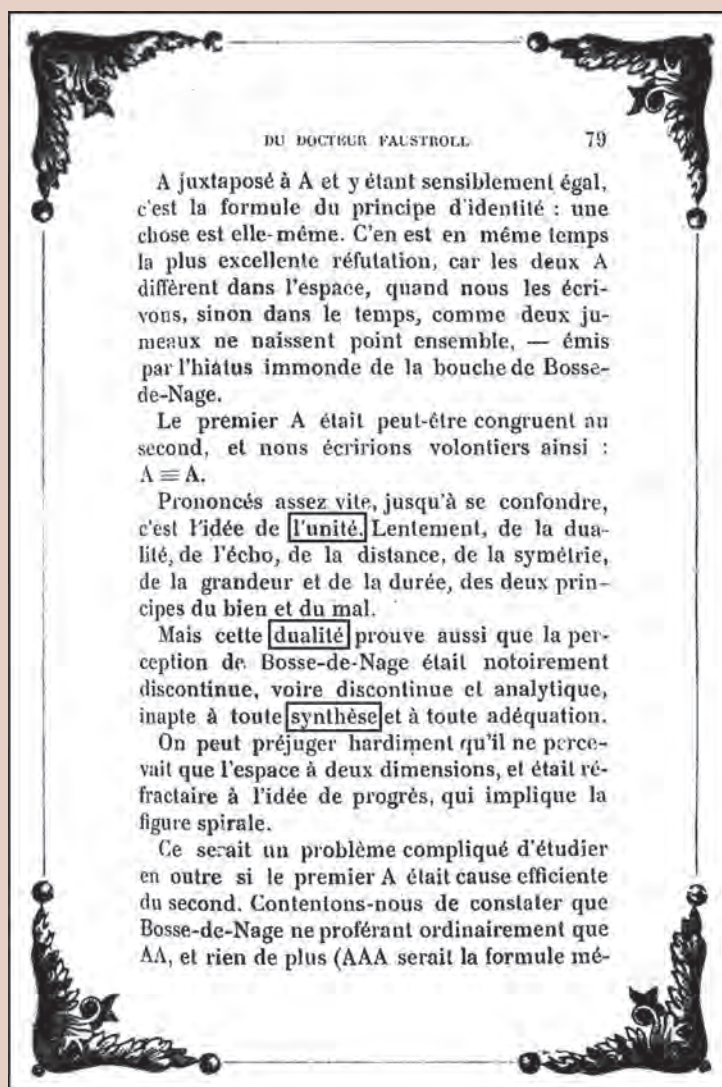
Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
Dadascope: Carte Postale, 1956-1961;
premiered 9 March 1965.
Film, 39:08.
Paris, FR: Centre Georges Pompidou.

Of course, the venerability of traditions associated with the triad has dispersed into popular superstitions. Characteristically, at the beginning of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan in Martello tower hacked three fried eggs out of a pan and into respective plates, saying “*In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti*” (Joyce 1934:1.14), in mocking mummery of the Christological Trinity in the doctrine of the unity of the divine substance in three divine essences. However, triplicity for Duchamp was filtered down to be rid of its magical or esoteric qualities and be evoked as a concept emblematic of multivalence. The *Carte Postale* sequence in Hans Richter’s film *Dadascope* begins with a scene in which Duchamp looks at himself in a three-sided mirror, fragmenting his appearance, which could feasibly be an allusion of his multifaceted identity (Naumann, Bailey and Shahade 2009:73). This new identity is referenced in the pun of combining the initial three letters of the French words “*Mariée*” and “*célibataires*” in the *Glass*’ title to form a third word, the author’s name “*Marcel*”.

To appreciate the value of the triad for Duchamp, it is instrumental to examine two particular works of his. First, the *Malic Moulds* that in 1914 he turned into nine, “a multiple of three [to] go with my idea of threes” (Cabanne 1971:48). Aiming to explain Duchamp’s emphasis on this number, Hamilton remarked on his Cartesian reasoning over superstitious or magical thinking, “Triplication deprives the art object of [...] that reverence given to a unique work for [...] its singularity. [...] Point, line and plane are all submitted to systematised hazard – a triple use of triple chance.” (Hamilton in d’Harnoncourt 1973:65). Henderson further suggested that Duchamp’s preoccupation with three and sets of three can also be understood as specifically anti-Bergsonian, celebrating the numbering and resultant cutting up of duration that Bergson decried (Henderson 1998:179). It is also worth surveying here the 3 *Standard Stoppages* of 1913-1914. This work was supposed to challenge the standard metric system, treasured in the Pavillion de Breteuil in Sèvres, which was a matter of French national pride and identity (Naumann 1984:170). In order to serve his aim, Duchamp chose to propose three inconsistent standards. Apparently, one standard would be simply just another metric tyranny, two would only be but a convenient pair, whereas three genuinely disorientates.

After their making, Duchamp used the configuration of each of the 3 *Standard Stoppages* three times to create the *Network of Stoppages* of 1914, which served as a basis for the *Capillary Tubes*, as well as *Tu m' (You [blank] Me)* of 1918. This work then, epitomising Duchampian subjectivity, became emblematic of his whole rationale.

On a superficial level, the reason why all the aforementioned authors used the sacred number three and its multiples is to relate their work to a tradition that had its roots in Homer. Of course, Modernism's avant-garde had irony, mockery and paradox in mind. Even so, the challenge for all the authors remained to use the number three so intelligently and seamlessly as to be taken for granted. However, the focus on two obscure yet related clues may provide a rather more insightful reason for the triad's significance. Kazantzakis composed *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* over the course of 14 years (1924-1938) arriving at an epic poem that is nearly three times longer than the Homeric *Odyssey* (12,110 lines). In defence of its exactly 33,333 lines, he wrote, "The number three is sacred for me simply because it is an arithmetic expression of the dialectics' course of the mind from the *thesis* (position) to the *antithesis* (opposition) and thence to the climax of every effort the *synthesis* (composition)." (Kazantzakis 1943:1029). By this means Kazantzakis points the way in which such a sophisticated proposition, inspired by Hegel's belief that spiritual reality develops according to the triadic process of thesis/antithesis/synthesis (Pinkard 2000:ix), relates to Homer. Having established the 'pataphysical connection of *Faustroll* to the *Odyssey* (see I.3), it is not surprising that Jarry uses this idea to tease the meanings of Bosse-de-Nage's "Ha ha", his buffoonish way of expressing affirmation, "Pronounced quickly enough [...] it is the idea of *unity*. Pronounced slowly, it is the idea of *duality* [...] But this duality proves also that the perception of Bosse-de-Nage was notoriously [...] unsuited to all *syntheses*" (Jarry 1965:75). These clues relate the sacred number three to the archetypal notion of *synthesis*, which is not just the ability to compose, integrate and merge, but is the foundation stone of creativity as the most important asset by which to navigate through a changing world. This quintessential quality seems after all to be at the core of Homer's *Odyssey*. And it was this quality that all aforementioned appropriators claimed from Homer.

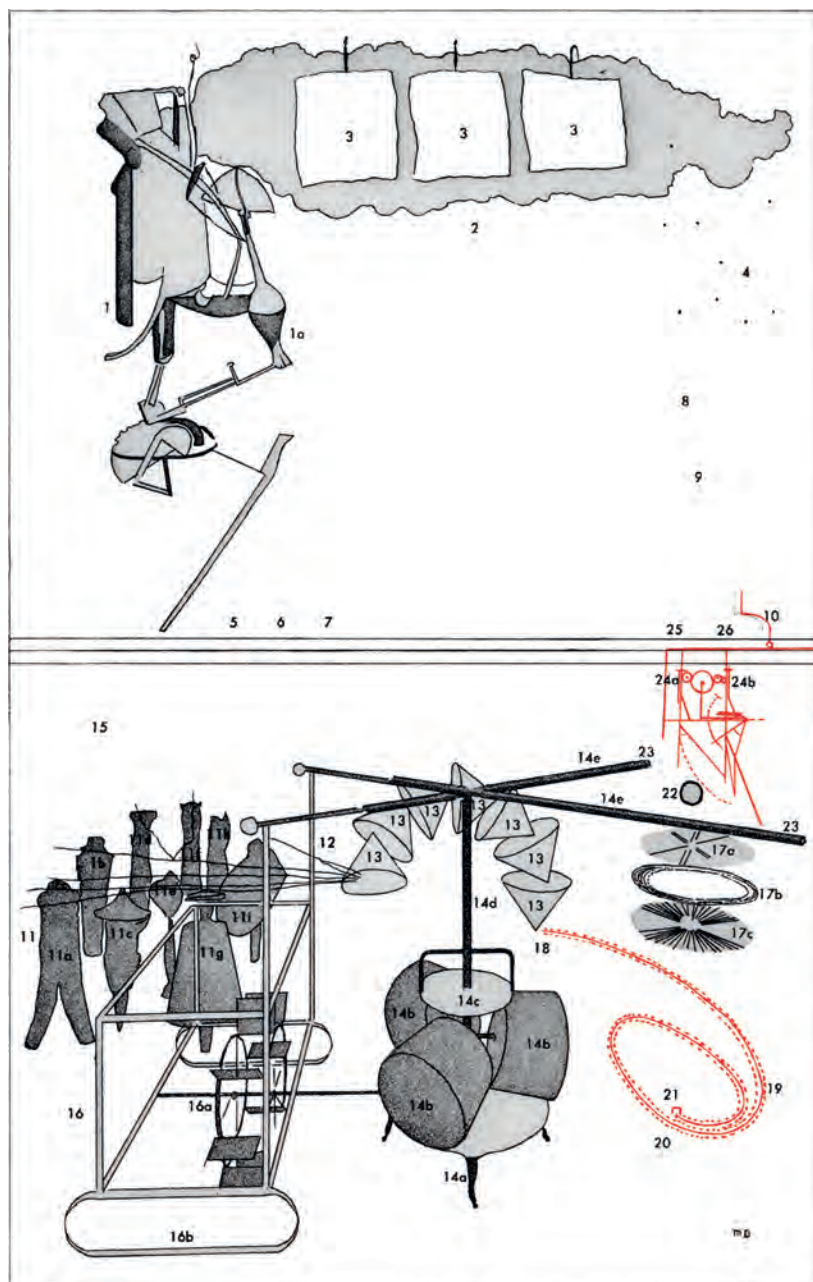


Alfred Jarry (France, 1873-1907).
Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll,
pataphysicien.
 Paris, FR: Eugène Fasquelle, 1911:79.
 Courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de
 France, Paris.

III.2

The Components of the *Glass* as a matter of fact and by extension

Despite *The Green Box* being issued in 1934 as its manual and *The White Box* being published in 1967 to help identify its constituent elements and *Notes* being published posthumously in 1980 to throw even more light on it, Duchamp's *Glass* remains an open-ended enigma whose exegesis is a hitherto unsurpassable challenge.



THE BRIDE'S DOMAIN (upper half of the glass):

1. The Bride (*Pendu femelle*, arbor-type)
 - a. Wasp or Sex Cylinder
2. Top Inscription or Milky Way (the cinematic blossoming)
3. Draft Pistons or Nets
4. Nine Shots
5. Bride's garment
6. Region of the Gilled Cooler (isolating plates)
7. Horizon
8. Region of the picture of cast shadows
9. Region of the mirror image of the sculpture of drops
10. Juggler of Gravity (also called the Trainer, Handler, or Tender of Gravity)

THE BACHELOR APPARATUS (lower half of the glass):

11. Nine Malic Molds (or Eros's Matrix) forming the Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries
 - a. Priest
 - b. Delivery Boy
 - c. Gendarme
 - d. Cuirassier (cavalryman)
 - e. Policeman
 - f. Undertaker
 - g. Flunky (liveried servant)
 - h. Busboy
 - i. Stationmaster
12. Capillary Tubes
13. Sieves or Parasols (within are the Drainage Slopes)
14. Chocolate Grinder
 - a. Louis XV chassis
 - b. Rollers
 - c. Necktie
 - d. Bayonet
 - e. Scissors
15. Region of the Waterfall
16. Glider (Chariot or Sleigh)
 - a. Water Mill Wheel
 - b. Runners sliding in a groove
17. Oculist Witnesses
 - a. Oculist Charts
 - b. Oculist Charts
 - c. Oculist Charts
18. Region of the Butterfly Pump
19. Toboggan (or Corkscrew or Slopes of Flow)
20. Region of the Three Crashes (or Splashes)
21. Weight with nine holes
22. Mandala (a magnifying glass to focus the splashes)
23. Marbles
24. Boxing match
 - a. First ram
 - b. Second ram
25. Region of the sculpture of drops
26. Region of the "Wilson-Lincoln effect"

No. 10 and nos. 18-26 are elements that were not completed in the *Large Glass* (1915-1923).

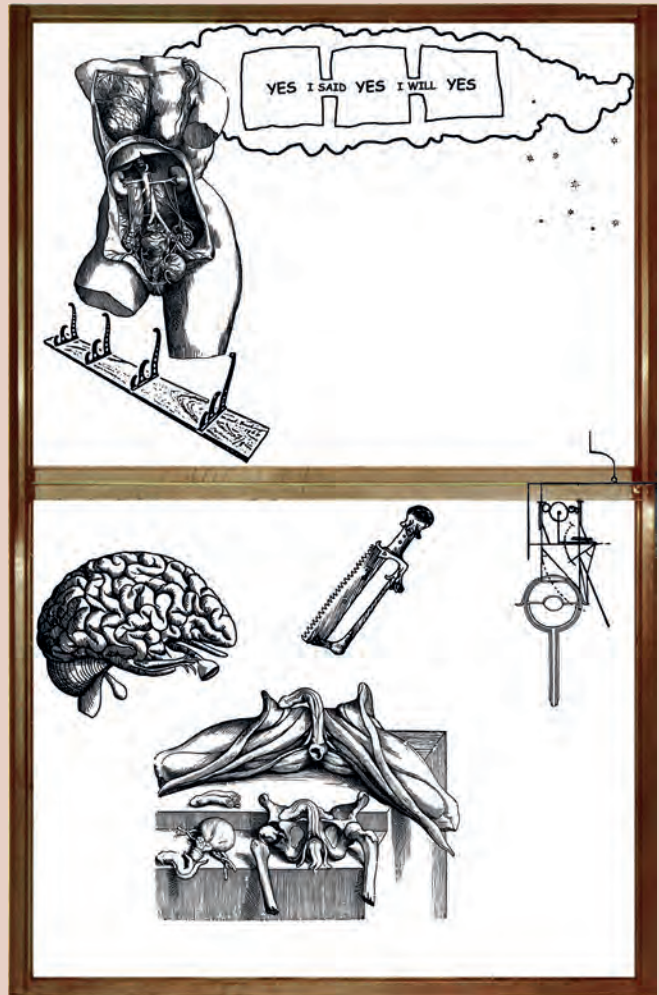
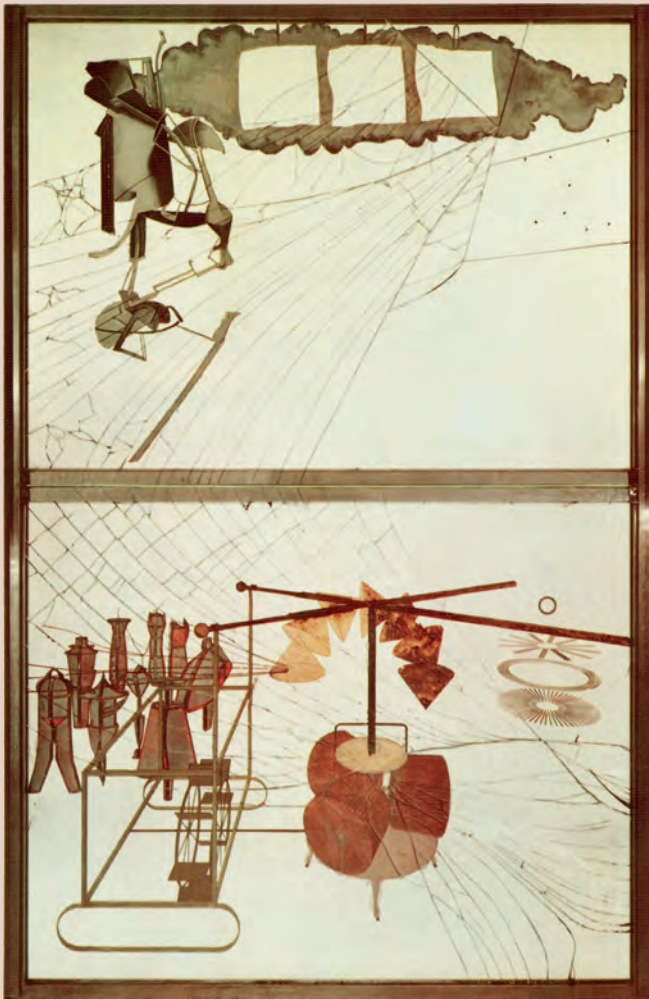
Diagram of Components of 1973 based on Duchamp's etching, *The Large Glass Completed* of 1965. Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA.

Having been exposed to the critique of tradition and accustomed to the shock of the new, it is not so much of a challenge today, as it must have been when the *Glass* was first presented in 1926, for the contemporary viewers to lay their eyes on its iconoclastic vocabulary and attempt the decipherment of its enigma. A detailed description of all its components may give some insight in Duchamp's complex thinking. While vacationing in Cadaqués in the summer of 1965, Duchamp etched a rendering of his *Glass*, completed even with features not appearing on the final work, to be included in Arturo Schwarz's *The Large Glass and Related Works*, which was published by Galleria Schwarz, Milan, in 1967. This etching served as a basis for the Philadelphia Museum of Art's posthumous *Diagram of Components* of 1973 (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:63), which best describes 26 items of the *Glass* in as neat an order as possible.

Brought all together, the aforementioned items of the *Glass*, based on Duchamp's notes, relate in the following imaginative way. Basically, the work is horizontally divided into two halves; the upper half is the *Bride's* domain, which is strictly separated from that of the *Bachelors'* by the *Horizon* (№7). Its protagonist is the *Bride* (№1). Being stripped from her *Garment* (№5), she is reduced to the *Wasp or Sex Cylinder* (№1a). The *Bride* hangs together with her *Apparatus* (№1) from a hook on the top, which appears to be loosened. It seems that the whole of the *Bride's Apparatus* (№1&1a) is actually supported by the *Cinematic Blossoming* (№2), which hangs more securely from three hooks on the top. She transmits her commands to the *Bachelors'* realm below through the three *Draft Pistons* (№3) of the *Cinematic Blossoming*. These commands initiate a series of operations in the *Bachelors*. The lower half is occupied by the *Bachelor Apparatus*. Its key element is the *Chariot* (№16) that slides back and forth on rods free of friction because it is made of "emancipated metal" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:56). The *Chariot's* side is attached to the handling arms of the *Scissors* (№14e) and its to-and-fro movement controls the opening and closing of its cutting ends. The *Water Mill Wheel* (№16a) on the *Chariot* turns thanks to an invisible *Waterfall* (№15). The *Wheel* activates via an axial rod the *Chocolate Grinder* (№14). According to other plans, not executed, the movement is actuated by the fall between the *Chariot* and the *Chocolate Grinder* of a hook bearing the weight of a bottle of *Bénédictine*, "an ironic concession to still lifes" (Matisse 1983:92). The *Bachelors'* domain is manned by the *Nine Malic Moulds* (№11), which form the *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries*. Each *Mould* identifies with a then strictly male profession – Priest (№11a), Department Store Delivery Boy (№11b), Gendarme (№11c), Cuirassier or Cavalryman (№11d), Policeman (№11e), Undertaker (№11f), Flunky or Liveried Servant (№11g), Busboy (№11h) and, later added to the group the ninth *Mould*, Stationmaster (№11i). These *Moulds* host *Illuminating Gas* that is released from their upper end to *Capillary Tubes* (№12) of hair-like thinness that converge nearby towards the *Sieves*. In its passage through the *Tubes*, the *Gas* solidifies. So, when the solidified *Gas* reaches the opening, it is extruded by pressure from the mould in the form of elemental rods, which break into spangles, short needles that are lighter than air and ascend through the seven conical *Sieves* (№13) in a semi-circular arc toward the *Chocolate Grinder* (№14). Arching over the *Grinder*, the *Sieves* empty the spangles onto the three *Rollers* (№14b), which turn them into "erotic liquid" (Matisse 1983:133). Subsequently, the liquid spills through an invisible *Toboggan* (№19) onto the floor, in the *Region of the Three Splashes* (№20) and bounces upward through the silvery *Oculist Witnesses* (№17a,b,c) and the *Mandala* (№22). Once through the *Mandala*, which is specified to be "a magnifying glass to focus the splashes", the *Splashes* aim to reach the *Bride's* realm at the *Nine Shots* (№4), represented by holes supposedly caused by the cannon shots on the glass. Each *Splash* was originally meant to pass through three extra challenges before being released to the upper half of the work – the *First and Second Ram* (№24a&b) of the *Boxing Match* (№24), the *Region of the Wilson-Lincoln Effect* (№26) and the *Juggler of Gravity* (№10), but, though described, they remain invisible.

The detailed interpretation of the *Glass'* components confirms its subject is about sex as an endlessly frustrating process, the relationship between incompatible entities and the collision of aims between female dream and male desire. In the *Glass*, Duchamp masterfully merges disparate forces, such as popular entertainment, technology and eroticism. He responded creatively to a wonderful mix of disciplines ranging from literature, philosophy, mythology, alchemy, psychoanalysis and science to aesthetics. So, the *Glass* was reviewed based on the various methods that major art critics have so far used to interpret it – the literary of André Breton and Octavio Paz; the philosophical of Jean-François Lyotard; the mythological of Octavio Paz and Linda Henderson; the alchemic of Ulf Linde, Arturo Schwarz, John Golding, David Hopkins and Linda Henderson; the psychoanalytic of Michel Carrouges, Octavio Paz and David Hopkins; the scientific of Linda Henderson; the aesthetic of John Golding and Jean Clair. All these previous interpretations are as valid and may be seen to complement one another. Their acceptability is reflected in what Duchamp said to Pierre Cabanne about Breton, Carrouges and Lebel who gave different interpretations of it during his lifetime – "Each of them gives his particular note to his interpretation, which isn't necessarily true or false, which is interesting." (Cabanne 1971:42). So, the present study aims to research the author's basic rationale and underlying foundation with due respect for all that has been so far written and said about his work.

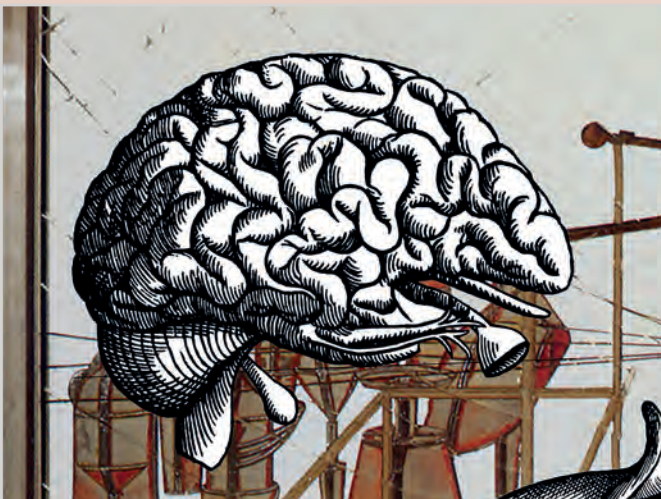
There have already been so many takes on Duchamp's *Glass* and there will be as many interpretations as there are people thinking about it. Duchamp's notes are a reliable source of his thinking. The rest is sheer speculation. As author of the *Glass*, Duchamp was careful to reveal as much about it as would make it look decent, that is disciplined and structured. Ever since its first exhibition in 1926, the *Glass* became open for public scrutiny. In essence, the *Glass* was created for people in posterity to think about it themselves. One cannot ascertain if what people write or say about the *Glass* were ever in Duchamp's mind. It is likely that the *Glass* was arrived at by pure instinct. However, the working of instinct can set off things in the subconscious. Everything in life is haphazard. One must always have the ability to accept ambiguity and ambivalence. The conceptual reduction of the *Glass* helps to unravel its slippery complexities. The whole idea is to reduce its meaning to as basic an understanding as possible in order to popularise its essence.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even: The Large Glass*, 1915-1923, New York. Mixed media: oil, lead foil and wire, aluminium foil, mirror silvering, dust, varnish, glass panels and strips, wood and steel, 225 x 175. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | Visual simplification of Duchamp's *The Large Glass* (1915-1923) to its bare essentials after Vesalius' *Fabrica* (1543) et alia.

The *Glass* shuns interpretation largely due to its iconoclasm. To gain a better understanding of it, the *Glass* may be portrayed figuratively with elements that make clearer the connection of the Bride to Penelope and the Bachelors to the Suitors. For this purpose, prompted by Juan Antonio Ramirez, carefully selected excerpts of prints in Andreas Vesalius' *On the Fabric of the Human Body* of 1543 come in handy for their beauty and strength of design. While in Munich in 1912, Duchamp may have visited the famous anatomical collection in the Vesalianum, where he would come across the illustrations of this great anatomist (*Marcel Duchamp in Munich 1912* 2012:22). Though such an attempt at the iconification of the *Glass* seems at first to be naïve, it may nevertheless throw light on and simplify obscure Homeric aspects of Duchamp's conception.

Vesalius' *Brain in Profile* (1543) on Duchamp's *Nine Malic Moulds* (1915-1923), 2013. Digital collage by the author.



In the terrestrial half, are the Bachelors representing the 'malic' world, which is immersed in sexual desire. Vesalius' *Brain in Profile* superposed on the *Nine Malic Moulds* is evocative of the stereotypical male boasting that men are more cerebral than women. Ironically, Duchamp reduced the *Bachelors* to an assortment of metal casts containing gas instead of grey matter. In the awareness of Duchampian humour, one is tempted to think of gas in this case as flatulence, colloquially 'fart'. The *Malic Moulds* closely resemble the Suitors of Penelope, which formed a varied mix of useless nobility. They were too young to fight in Troy and, growing during the war without proper guidance, gave priority to the appetitive part of the soul and indulged in flesh, wine and power. What is more, they come under the impression that they had the right to lord the palace of Ithaca, claim its vacant throne and marry its widowed queen. Actually, the Suitors of Penelope did not have much brain to make use of. Arguably under the influence of

wine, the suitor Eurymachus came out toward Odysseus with the unfounded insult, “The wine must have your brains” (Latimore 1965:18.391). As will be shown, Odysseus is the brainy one, sharply contrasting to the Suitors. As a matter of fact, the name of Antinous, leader of the Suitors, is a pun meaning against the mind.

Vesalius’ picture of *The Male Reproductive Organs* is superposed onto the *Chocolate Grinder*, the central object par excellence on the *Glass*, standing for the phallus. It is worth focusing on the taboo of male genitals, which Homer cited at three different sections of the *Odyssey* – “male parts” (Latimore 1965:6.129) of Odysseus, which he hid from the sight of Nausicaä with a leafy branch; “privates” (*ib.* 1965:18.87); “private parts” (*ib.* 1965:22.475) for the organs of men who are by comparison to Odysseus too inadequate, inferior and worthless to hold on to them. Coincidentally, in Vesalius’ illustration the penises of three deceased males are not just flayed in the name of science, but are further mutilated as a pitiful still-life of virility.

This sad affair leads to Vesalius’ *Bone Saw* that joins the *Scissors* attached on the *Chocolate Grinder*, which are put in motion by the Bachelors’ *Chariot*. This menacing instrument would explain the incident of severed male genitals right below. In Homer, castration is reserved for all those enemies of Odysseus, unworthy to be men, that escaped his purifying slaughter – the nasty beggar Irus and the disloyal goatherd Melanthios. This punishment is described in both cases as a leitmotif, in the former case as a threat in the future tense, while in the latter as an executed deed in the past tense – “tore off his private parts and gave them to the dogs to feed on raw” (*ib.* 1965:22.475). However, though the linking of the saw with the sadomasochistic torture of male castration is obvious, this device is actually a threat on the life of the Bride if she may leave her Domain and dare approach the Bachelor Apparatus.

Vesalius imagined the *Horizontal Section of the Eye* as a hollow and straight optical nerve that leads to the centre of the eye’s lens. This picture, which is more imaginative than accurate, is superposed on the *Oculist Witnesses* and the *Mandala*. Duchamp’s designs are based on a study of abstract eye-testing charts comprising 3 successive, aligned and varied discs, viewed perspectively and obeying the numerical relationship that is based on number 3 – whose sanctity Homer underlined in the *Odyssey* (he brought it up intelligently at least 60 times) and whose banality Joyce emphasised in *Ulysses* (Joyce 1934:1.14). What is more, the *Oculist Witnesses*’ absolute alignment and the requirement that the Bachelors’ desires had to pass through them is unmistakably evocative of the Trial of the Bow in the *Odyssey*, whereby the Suitors were challenged to shoot one arrow through the openings on 12 axes fixed on the ground. The *Mandala*, which is the next device above the *Oculist Witnesses*, appearing on the *Glass* in the form of a circle, is like a crystal ball, which Duchamp described as a Kodak lens (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:83). This device, relating to the eye, has something metaphysical about it, akin to an *orbiculum*, a crystal ball generally associated with the performance of clairvoyance in the hope of detecting in or through it significant messages or visions. As such it seems to represent the role of the blind seer Tiresias, whose advice was necessary for Odysseus to find his way home.



Vesalius’ *The Male Reproductive Organs* (1543) on Duchamp’s *Chocolate Grinder* (1915-1923), 2013. Digital collage by the author.



Vesalius’ *Bone Saw* (1543) on Duchamp’s *Scissors* (1915-1923), 2013. Digital collage by the author.



Vesalius’ *Section of the Eye* (1543) on Duchamp’s *Oculist Witnesses* and *Mandala* (1915-1923), 2013. Digital collage by the author.



Galileo's *Pleiades Constellation* (1610)
on Duchamp's *Nine Shots*
(1915-1923), 2013.
Digital collage by the author.

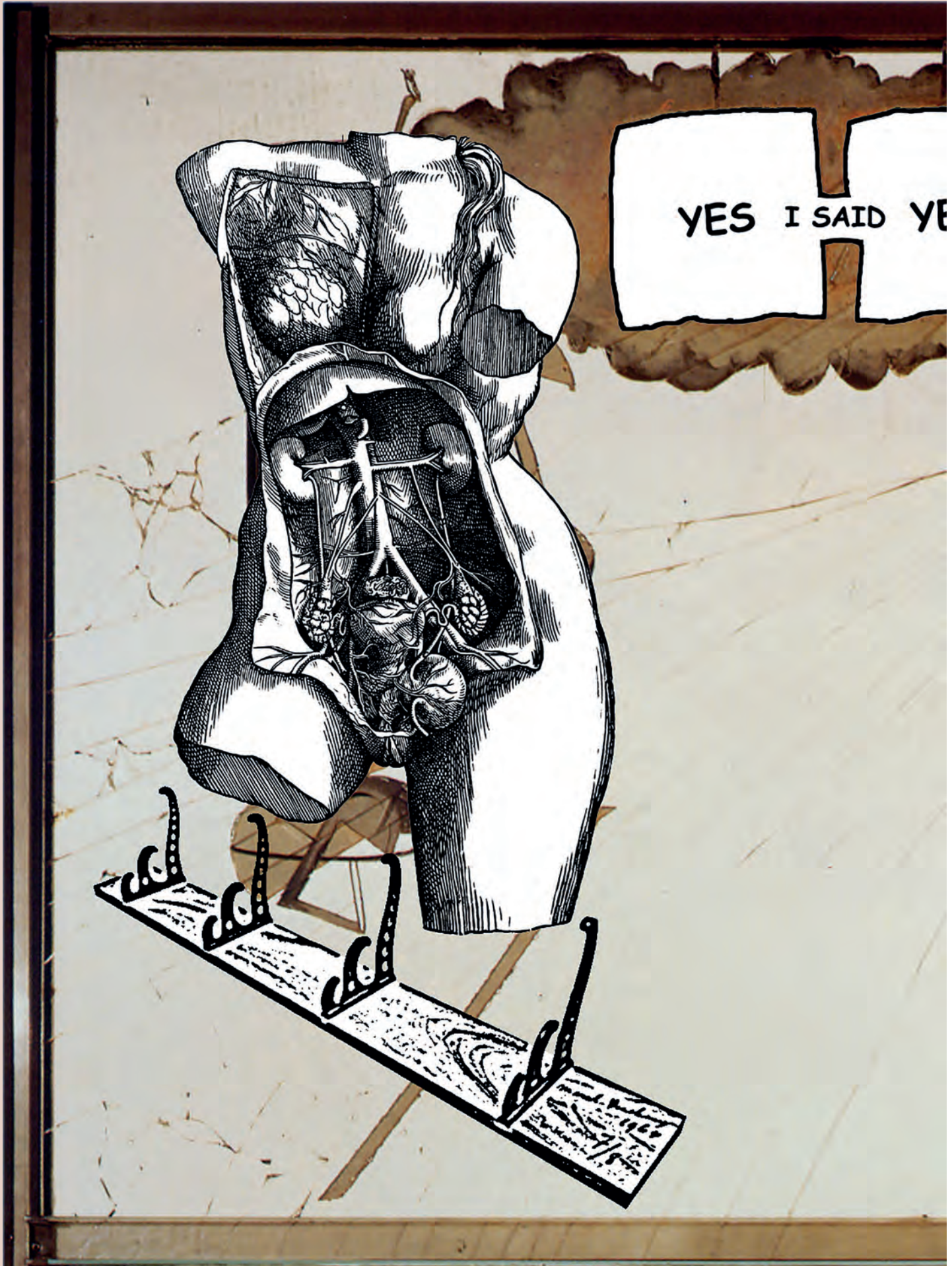
Once through the *Mandala*, the desires of the Bachelors are refracted and break up in random directions that aim for the Bride and create the *Nine Shots*, a respective number of bullet holes on the *Glass*. Though their position was arrived at by a chance procedure, their number and form must evoke the Pleiades, mentioned as one of the constellations that assisted Odysseus, in his custom-built raft, when he sailed off from Calypso's island of Ogygia towards Ithaca (Lattimore 1965:5.272-274). In this instance the *Shots* are replaced with the nine largest stars of the Pleiades constellation in Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610).

In the celestial half, Vesalius' plate of the *Dissected Female Torso* with abdomen opened to show kidneys, ovaries and other anatomical features, whose internal concentration makes them appear more complex than those of the male. The apparent complexity of female anatomy is somewhat reminiscent of the seemingly inseparable relation of the *Bride* to the automobilistic *boudoir* that endows her with the sole sense of attachment she may experience in her *Domain*. Its intricate design could further refer to Penelope's *weaving ruse* and arachnid tactics. The *Blossoming* of the *Bride*, a dominant element of the female world, is like the graphic convention of a speech balloon in comic strips, anticipating its blankness to be filled with unadorned and unsophisticated text. Here, the blossoming hovers over the *Bride*, like the dream that Athena sent to Penelope to appease her mourning over her supposed widowhood (Lattimore 1965:4.803). The hanger from which her garment slid, following the stripping, has fallen on the *Horizon* and is appropriately replaced with a rendering of Duchamp's *Trap* of 1917, the snare that a woman reserves for man, an oblique reference to the *Wooden Horse* of Troy.

Prompted by the stripping of the *Bride*, the Bachelors materialise their desire for her. They collectively activate the brain, which represents them as male common sense, rationality without emotion or imagination. The brain sends its signals to the male genitals that are the source to produce sperm. Spilling from the genitals onto the floor in the form of sperm, desire is ejaculated upwards to the *Bride's* high target, via the cross-section of the eye. Unless the launch of desire is as straight as a laser beam to go through the optical nerve and refract after passing the centre of the eye's lens, it would not head for its target. Even so, however, the one Bachelor whose desire reaches the *Bride's Blossoming* will, alas, not enjoy her. This is not because of the *Scissors* that are lurking to destroy the *Bride*, but rather because her triphonic affirmation is always set on an ideal invisible entity, the fiction of her imagination.

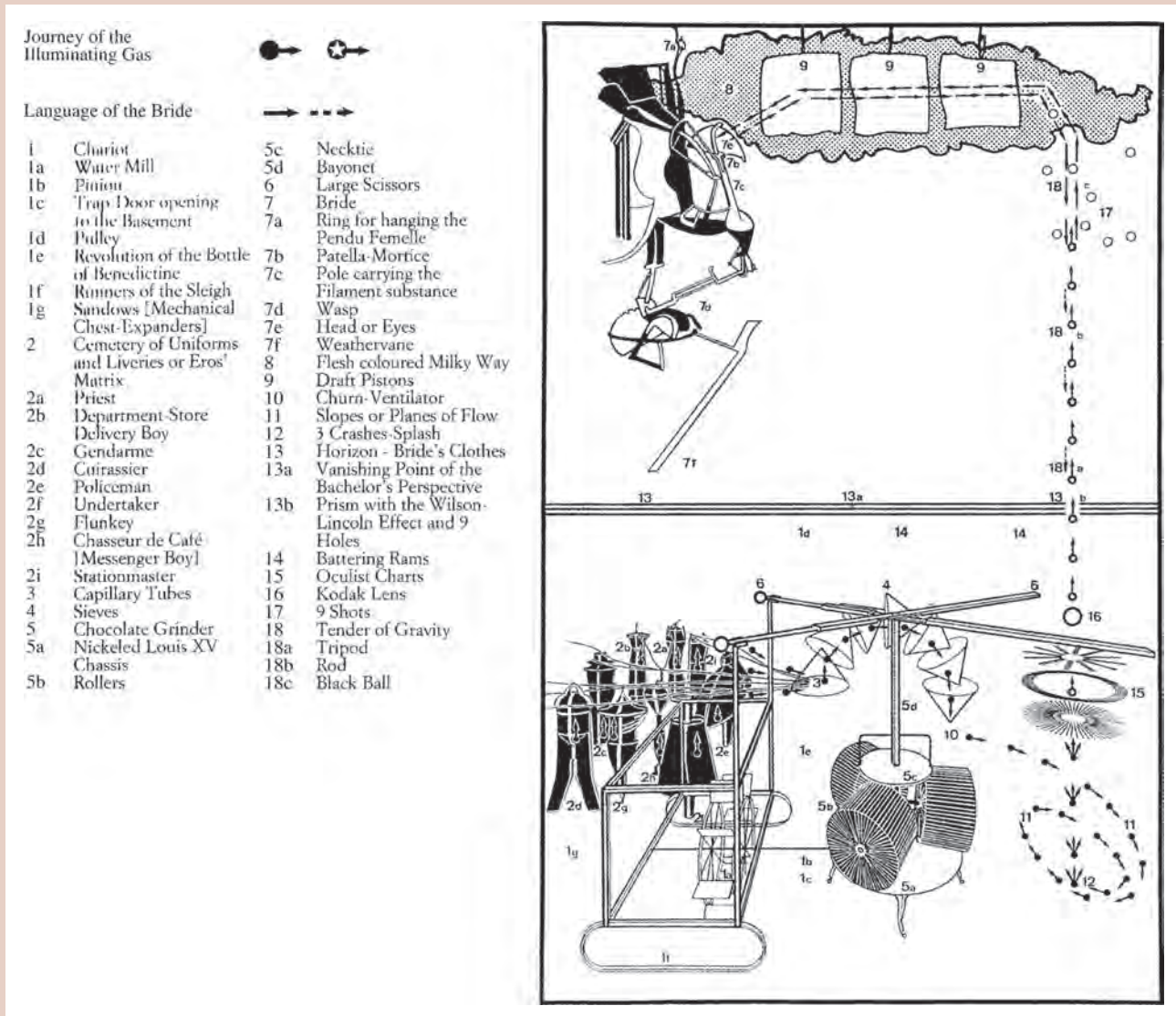
In conclusion, Duchamp described the components of the *Glass* to an extent that teases its hidden meaning. The result is an ambiguous condition lying somewhere between literalness and utopia. On the one hand, the author's literalness may safely be deduced from the *Glass'* programme, whereby he turns metaphors into matter-of-fact. As Paz notes, "erotic liquid is called automobiline, the Waterfall produces amorous electricity, the Illuminating Gas becomes explosive liquid" (Paz 1978:161). From Duchamp's statement, "The last state of this nude bride before the orgasm which may (might) bring about her fall graphically" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:43.7), it is fairly clear that part of Duchamp's intention was to create an ironic image of human lovemaking as a mechanistic and endlessly frustrating process. The theme is the real face of sex; ever imperfect, incomplete and unfulfilled. Richard Hamilton understood it as a game of the artist's own devising (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:58). On the other hand, in the *Glass* Duchamp also records what could be considered a utopia, "a reality which would be possible by slightly distending the laws of physics and chemistry" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:71). This is a Duchampian utopia of as much metaphysical as philosophical nature. Duchamp's note, "The bach. serving as an architectonic base for the bride the latter becomes a sort of apotheosis of virginity." (ib. 1973:39.1), clearly removes the *Bride* from real life to the sphere of metaphysics. The other note, "The bride has a life centre – the bachelors have not. They live on coal or other raw material drawn not from them but from their not them." (ib. 1973:45), contains a reference to nonentity, which condensably refers to the philosophical concept of otherness of being, recalling Odysseus' stratagem to call himself "Nobody" (Lattimore 1965:9.366) or Joyce's ironic description of Bloom as either "Everyman or Noman" (Joyce 1934:17.712). Incidentally, such an Odyssean wit, which Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno described as "adaptation to death" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944:48), rendered man better suited to his postwar environment.

Vesalius' *Dissection of the Female Torso*
(1543) on Duchamp's
Bride Aparatus (1915-1923), 2013.
Digital collage by the author.



III.3

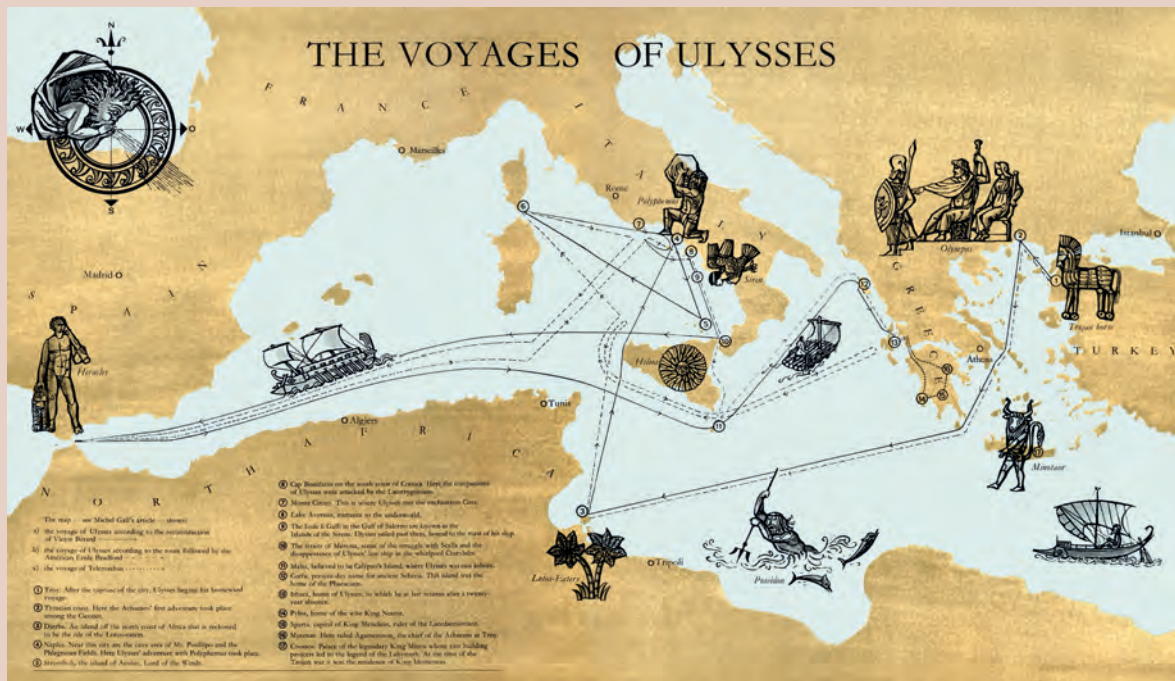
The Journey of the Illuminating Gas as an Odyssey



Journey of the Illuminating Gas and Language of the Bride, as illustrated in Jean Suquet's Miroir de la Mariée. Paris, FR: Éditions Flammarion, 1974.

When Jean Suquet submitted to Duchamp approximately 40 pages of poetically written text about the *Glass*, the latter responded within 13 days, on 25 December 1949, ending with the following, "After all, I really owe it to you to have stripped bare my stripping bare." (Suquet 1992). Therefore, following Duchamp's 1965 description of the *Glass*' components, their action, as specified by Suquet, is inferred to be a linear and double narrative – one being the *Journey of the Illuminating Gas* from the *Bachelors* to the *Bride* at the latter's initiative and the other being the two-way *Language of the Bride* in response to the *Bachelors*. The action occurs as follows. The *Bride* (№7) strips and her language travels via messages through the *Draft Pistons* (№9) that induce a gas cast by the *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries* (№2) into the shapes of the *Bachelors*. Unable to contain their excitement, the *Bachelors* allow the gas to escape over their heads through the *Capillary Tubes* (№3), where the gas freezes and breaks into spangles that are fed into the *Sieves* (№4), condensing into a liquid suspension. In this form it falls via the *Slopes of Flow* (№11) onto the ground and bounces upward through the *Oculist Charts* (№15), who sublimate it. Going through the *Kodak Lens* (№16) and if it escapes the *Large Scissors* (№6), the *Splash* (№12) is dispersed and, in the hope of winning the *Bride*, aims for her with the *Nine Shots* (№17).

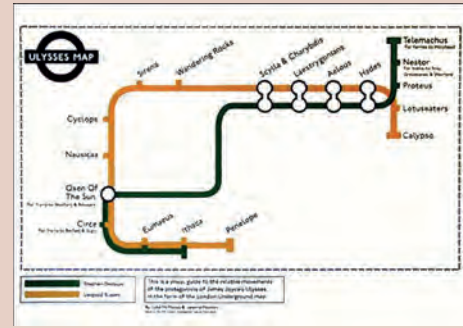
It must be noted that the illuminating gas was quite central to life at the time Duchamp conceived of the *Glass*, which is why he chose to use it in his composition. However, the aforementioned description of its journey seems ludicrously complex. In its linearity, however, this journey echoes the supposed convoluted linear homeward voyage of Odysseus in the Mediterranean Sea, classically described in 1929 by French Homeric scholar Victor Bérard (1864-1931). It was based on the sea and connected 13 ancient sites of the Mediterranean, as described in Erich Lessing's 1966 book *The Voyages of Ulysses* – Troy, northwest Anatolia



The *Odyssey* according to Victor Bérard and Ernle Bradford, as illustrated in Erich Lessing, *The Voyages of Ulysses: A photographic interpretation of Homer's classic*. London, UK: Macmillan, 1966.

in modern Turkey (№1); the Cicones on the southwestern coast of Thrace (№2); the Lotophagi in the island of Djerba, off southern Tunisia (№3); the Cyclopes in the Phlegraean Fields, west of Naples (№4); Aeolus, Lord of the Winds, in the island of Stromboli, Tyrrhenian Sea (№5); the Laestrygonians at Cap Bonifacio, south Corsica (№6); Circe on the island of Aeaea, which is identified with Mount Circeo at Lazio, southwest coast of Italy (№7); Hades entered through Lake Avernus, Cumae (№8); the Sirens at the little islands of the Sirenasas, off the coast of Amalfi (№9); the Scylla and Charybdis at the Strait of Messina, between Sicily and south Italy (№10); the island of Thrinacia, where Helios kept his cattle, identifies with Sicily (№10a); Calypso on the Island of Ogygia – Homer describes it as “the navel of all the waters” (Lattimore 1965:1.50). In the *Inferno* XXVI Dante mentions Odysseus’ voyage past the Pillars of Heracles, which could mean that Ogygia identifies with the legendary Atlantis in the Atlantic Ocean (№11); the Phaeacians in the island of Scheria, which is modern Corfu, northernmost island of the Ionian Sea (№12) and the home of Odysseus in Ithaca (№13), which Wilhelm Dörpfeld claimed to be modern Lefkada. In 1963 British historian Ernle Bradford (1922-1986) added some new suggestions – the Cyclopes were in Marsala, western Sicily; the island of Aeolus was Ustica, off northern Sicily; Calypso was on Malta, south of Italy and north of Libya. In more recent times, the majority of classical scholars hold the view that Odyssean locations are best treated as imaginary places. The modern Greek Homerist Johannes Th. Kakridis (1901-1992) ruled on this matter in a way akin to the Duchampian dictum, “there is no solution, because there is no problem” (cited in Janis and Janis 1945:24). To sum up his view, it is useless to try to locate the places mentioned in Odysseus’ narrative on the map, because the *Odyssey* is a work of poetry and not a travel log; one cannot confuse the narrative of the *Odyssey* with history unless one believes in the existence of gods, giants and monsters (Kakridis 1986). Of course it is most valid to enquire what real locations inspired these imaginary places and why, but one must always bear in mind that geography is not the main concern either of Odysseus as narrator or the poet. Such a conclusion is perhaps more in keeping with Duchamp’s programme for the *Journey of the Illuminating Gas*.

In its doubling, the aforementioned narrative seems to further correspond to the two overlapping adventure cycles of the father, the *Odyssey* proper and of his son, the *Telemachia*. The latter, which is also described in Lessing’s book, is based on the land and concerns the return voyage of Telemachus to Ithaca (№13) from Pylos (№14), Sparta (№15) and Myceanae (№16). The narrative’s double aspect also echoes Joyce’s *Ulysses* with the two intersecting odysseys of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom through Dublin on that single day of 16 June 1904, perhaps parodying the most special day in classical mythology - the Parthenon’s eastern pediment that tells the story of the birth of Athena, framed by the chariots of the ascending Helios (Sun) and the descending Selene (Moon). In the latter’s honour, the 16th of June is celebrated the world over as Bloomsday. In Dublin, fans mark it by retracing the itineraries and visiting the places described in the book. Of course, the stations covering the two routes are impossible to recreate as a single person’s experience. In 2012, Boston College professor of English literature Joseph Nugent put together *Walking Ulysses: Joyce’s Dublin Today*, an interactive annotated Google map that plots the journeys of the novel’s main characters through Dublin in 1904, giving users a virtual means to experience where life unfolded for Joyce in that city at that time (<http://ulysses.bc.edu/>). With typically Hibernian hyperbole, Joyce wanted “to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed



Joseph Nugent (Ireland). *Walking Ulysses: Joyce's Dublin Today*, 2012. Courtesy of Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA. | Vladimir Nabokov (Russia, 1899-1977). *Map of Paths in "Ulysses"*, 1969. | Luke McManus & Janette Mooney (Ireland, b. 1972 & 1970). *Ulysses Map*, 2011. Digital print on board, 70 x 100. Dublin, IE: The James Joyce Centre.

from my book” (cited in Delaney 1981:10). This was rather far from true. In *Vogue's* 1969 Christmas issue, Russian-American novelist Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977) offered his advice on teaching *Ulysses*,

“Instead of perpetuating the pretentious nonsense of Homeric, chromatic and visceral chapter headings, instructors should prepare maps of Dublin with Bloom’s and Stephen’s intertwining itineraries clearly traced.” (Talmey 1969:191). Nabokov’s take of a hand-drawn map of the paths that the protagonists took through Dublin is obviously quite unusable. More intelligible is the *Ulysses Map* that Luke McManus & Janette Mooney created in 2011 as “a visual guide to the relative movements of the protagonists [...] in the form of the London Underground map”. Citing Harry Beck’s 1931 schematic diagram, they designed two lines covering a total of 18 stations – a green line of 11 stations for Stephen and an orange line of 15 stations for Bloom, of which 8 stations converge. However, this take is also hardly a map. In fact, *Ulysses*, like the *Glass*, is beyond the concept of mapping. In principle, it mirrors only the elementary narrative of the *Odyssey*. With due respect to the sacred number three (see III.1), *Ulysses* is written in 18 parts, which is 6 parts short of the *Odyssey's* division. Each of the chapters corresponds to an episode of Homer’s classical epic, which recounts the decade-long and danger-fraught journey home from Troy of Odysseus. The juxtaposition of that Greek hero’s mythical adventures with the mundane events of Bloomsday infuses the work with a grand irony. Bloomsday is actually the author’s autobiographic tribute to Nora Barnacle, representing the date on which Joyce took his future wife on their first outing, a walk from Dublin to the nearby village of Ringsend (Ellmann 1959:156). Therefore, any attempt at cartography of either *Ulysses* or the *Glass* is vain because these works are allegorical rather than literal.

Acknowledging the obscure complexity in the *Glass's* narrative, what Duchamp said about the creative act must also be taken into consideration – “If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist, we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the aesthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it. All his decisions in the artistic execution of the work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self-analysis, spoken or written, or even thought out.” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:138). With this statement the *Glass's* author confirms the artists’ capacity to create intuitively rather than rationally. The vanity to pinpoint any meaning prompted Suquet to describe the viewers’ relation to the *Glass* quite poetically, “Let us, then, flow along together. This brother in wandering, let’s accompany him on his voyage – in spite of the fact that he does not spare guiding traces. He does not say anything about the direction of the *route* (path), he hardly indicates the movement of the *roue* (wheel). Thus, relying a lot on chance, dressed in personal rags, heavy with our own past, motivated by the very improbable prospect of enjoying the end of an *instantaneous rest*, let’s enter the impersonal duration of *The Large Glass*.” (Suquet 1992). This “brother in wandering” brings to mind the one and only person deserving his *Bride/Ithaca*, that is Duchamp as Odysseus.

In any case, the double narrative of desire from the Bachelors to the Bride and of the Bride’s dream for her Bachelors is admittedly an adventure informed by actions and reactions of either party. In this respect, Duchamp’s *Glass* may be inspired by Homer’s *Odyssey* as an unsurpassable action story and may resemble Joyce’s *Ulysses* as a convoluted narration of a transcendental day in Bloom’s life. However, the former is iconoclastic in execution, without idolatrous references. As aided by Breton’s essay, the subject of the *Glass* is identified to be the phenomenon of sexual interaction. Interestingly, Duchamp confided to Lawrence Steefel in the 1950s, “It is better to project into machines than to take it out on people.” (Steefel 1977:301.20). The fact of the matter is that the protagonists of the *Glass* are inhuman. Duchamp’s ability to find analogies for humans to machines opened up his options. Thinking of its ‘machineness’, Henderson suggested that “the *Glass* as structure resembles a compression in two dimensions of the bi-level cases at the Musée des Arts et Métiers, which were filled with the kinds of scientific objects that inspired his creation of its characters.” (Henderson 1998:173). She claimed that the Bride Apparatus is paralleled in exhibits relating to electromagnetic waves and wireless technology, while the Bachelor Apparatus corresponds to exhibits demonstrating the principles and practices of mechanics. Be that as it may, it is interesting that all constituent parts of the *Glass* may be interpreted as human actions or ordinary activities of real life. Hints relating these parts with Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses* are offered, but they poetically correspond to an inner world rather than a physical reality.

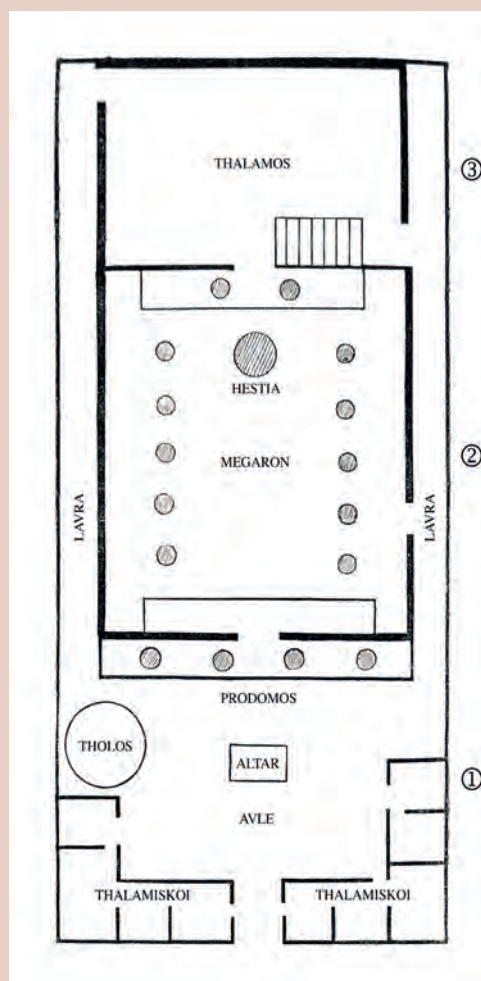
This is a Man's World But it would be Nothing without a Woman

III.4

The palace of Odysseus, as depicted in the *Odyssey*, may be taken as representing the Homeric house. A clear description of its ground plan was proposed by English classical archaeologist Percy Gardner (1846-1937), in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* of 1882 and his valuable essay can be summarised as follows. The palace consisted of three parts: *avle* (№1), the open court; *megaron* (№2), the men's hall; *thalamos* (№3), the women's hall (Gardner 1882:265). The palace was entered by doors leading into the *avle*. On either side were the *thalamiskoi* (small apartments) used for various and mixed purposes, such as grinding for flour (*Odyssey* 20.108) and staff gatherings for eating or sleeping (*ib.* 19.48). At the far end of the *avle* was the *prodomos* (vestibule), with a colonnade along the front of the *domos* (house proper). Crossing the *prodomos*, the visitor entered the *megaron*, a hall of great size where the *archon* (chief) received guests. At either end of the *megaron* was a door, the front leading into the *avle* and the back into the *thalamos*. In the heart of the *megaron* was the *hestia* (open hearth), which heated the space and cooked the food (*ib.* 20.123) and its smoke escaped through a corresponding hole in the roof. Besides the two principal doors of the *megaron*, there was an auxiliary door on the side, leading into the *lavrae* (*ib.* 22.128, 137), narrow passages that gave access to the *avle* and the *thalamos*, thus avoiding the necessity of passing through the *megaron*. The *thalamos* (*ib.* 22.151) was the palace's innermost apartment, immediately behind the *megaron* on the ground

floor, directly communicating with the latter by a door. There, women engaged in weaving, spinning and noble domestic occupations. Attached to the *thalamos* were the *apotheke* (armoury, *ib.* 22.140; 151-156) and the *thesaurus* (treasury, *ib.* 21.8) at its further extremity, with a high roof. The ordinary dormitories and other rooms of the women were in the *hyperoön*, upper story, which was reached by stairs.

Gardner's proposal above is closely based on the *Odyssey's* text and reveals the fact that there was clear segregation between men and women in Homeric society. Men's premises were directly accessible from the streets and public areas of the palace, whereas women's quarters were remote and protected. Women were considered the weaker gender and therefore needed to be protected and controlled. What is more, when visitors were entertained the women were not present, but remained in their secluded portion of the complex (Blundell 1995:139). Also, in times of peril, as when the legendary slaughter of the suitors ensued in the *megaron*, the women hid away in their quarters in the "strong-built storerooms" (Lattimore 1965:23.41). Even when describing the palace of Alcinous, which is a paradigm for order, Homer wrote, "As much as Phaeacian men are expert beyond all others / for driving a fast ship on the open sea, so their women / are skilled in weaving and dowered with wisdom bestowed by Athena, / to be expert in beautiful work, to have good character." (*ib.* 1965:7.108-111). This latter description speaks not only of an occupational difference between men and women, but is also praise for women's quality of work and even character. Even down to the 5th century, the historian Xenophon wrote in his *Oeconomicus*, a treatise on household management, "So it is seemly for a woman to remain at home and not to be out of doors; but for a man to stay inside, instead of devoting himself to outdoor pursuits, is disgraceful" (Blundell 1995:135). Ultraconservative though this habit at first appears, there was exception to such generalisation in one crucial area – in religious practice the barriers between women and public life were conspicuously breached (Blundell and Williamson 1998:1). Women were involved in religious ritual at all levels, often playing a more important role than men. In their exclusive role as priestesses they had a closer connection with the divine than men. The goddesses too displayed power and commanded respect equal to gods.



Percy Gardner
(England, 1846-1937).
Ground Plan of the Palace of
Odysseus, published in
The Journal of Hellenic Studies,
1882:266. Athens, GR:
The Archaeological Society
at Athens.

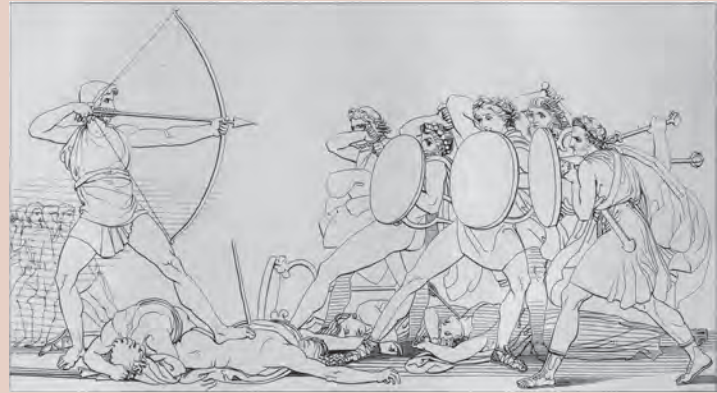


Abraham van Diepenbeeck (Flanders, 1596-1675). Frontispiece in John Ogilby's *Homer - His Odysses*, 1665. Engraving on paper, 35 x 24. London, UK: The British Library. | Detail showing Penelope at the Loom assisted by Maids.

The Homeric palace's layout obviously reflects social conventions in controlling the movement between spaces and the possibility of gender or any member interaction in the household. This fact is discreetly manifest in the frontispiece engraving for John Ogilby's (1600-1676) translation *Homer - His Odysses* of 1665. Appointed Master of the Revels in Ireland, Ogilby managed a very successful theatre in Dublin until it burned down in 1641. His experience with stage design was so overwhelming, that it was echoed on all 24 full-page illustrations in his publication. The artist under his commission was Abraham van Diepenbeeck, who handled every book with great skill and vigour. Chosen to represent the entire epic, the frontispiece gives ample information about the place and the people. The Palace of Ithaca is suggested by a Baroque façade crowned centrally with Zeus and Hermes and laterally with Athena and Poseidon, amidst panels with episodes from the *Odysses*. The façade serves as a barrier separating the women's quarters from the outside world of men. Penelope appears in the centre of the former section operating an advanced foot-treadle floor loom, assisted by five maids engaged with various related tasks. Out of the palace on Athena's side appears Odysseus with Telemachus in the company of three other fully armed men ready to fight. On Poseidon's side is the group of eight suitors with weapons passively attached on them, who are toasting with goblets in their hands. Such a bipolar juxtaposition of two domains forms a structural principle for both the *Glass* and *Ulysses*. Evidently, the *Glass* consists of two halves clearly divided by a horizon-line. The upper half, inhabited by the hovering Bride, appears to be celestial, while the lower half, peopled by the Bachelors, seems to be terrestrial as down-to-earth if not underworldish.

Homer's gender-based separation is not as superficial as it seems at first. There is a further register of separation that concerns gender discrepancies in terms of psychology. These are eloquently exemplified by two drawings of John Flaxman. The first drawing concerns *Penelope's Dream*, which Athena sent to the Queen's chamber in order to appease her lamentation for her virtuous husband. Her dream is in the image of Penelope's beloved sister Iphigene from a distant land who "came and stood above her head" (Lattimore 1965:4.803) to tell her to take courage because Pallas Athena has pity on her. With this scene, Homer suggests that Penelope's domain is calm and furnished with benevolence. Likewise, the *Cinematic Blossoming* is intensely familiar to the Bride. It is actually gas fume emitted by her automobile-like *Apparatus*. Being lighter than air, it swirls amorously like a cloud along and under the *Glass'* top bar. Painted by the hand in sensitive flesh tones, this fume is rid of the nasty connotations that it would be associated with today and rather provides a very saintly background as halo for the three *Draft Pistons* that it surrounds. Representing the Bride's drive for self-gratification, it may be appropriate to interpret the *Cinematic Blossoming* as her dream – a stereotypical psycho-social construction that becomes unfulfilled

and unconsummated women. This dream, then, contains the *tabulae rasae* (blank slates) on which she is to project her visions as commands. The second drawing concerns the *mnesterophonía* (slaughter of the suitors), in the palace's great hall, narrated in Book 22. This is a scene of real life with extreme violence, involving men armed with weapons, caused by the “desires of the Achaeans” (Lattimore 1965:2.90). In terms of the *Glass*, the Bachelors are mere moulds channelling their gaseous desire for the Bride through industrial equipment that violently transform it – from gas through solid to liquid – only to eventually leave its mark as bullet shots on the Bride's end. Considering the entire composition, it is tempting to bring to mind Karl Popper's famous essay *Of Clocks and Clouds* (Popper 1966), whereby “cloud” is the Bride's dreamy blossoming and “clock” is the Bachelors' desire apparatus.

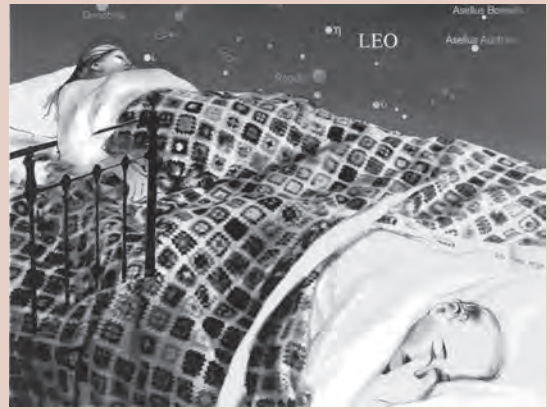


John Flaxman (England, 1755-1826). *The Odyssey of Homer: Plate VII - Penelope's Dream / Plate XXX - Odysseus killing the Suitors*, 1805. Etching on paper, 17 x 25 / 17 x 33. London, UK: Tate Gallery.

Despite the aforementioned gender-based separation, Homer also referred to an all-important grey zone in the Ithacan Palace, that is the *lechos* (nuptial bed) that Odysseus shared only with Penelope, which the latter refrained from using while the former was away. Gardner was clear to suggest, “in the midst of [the *thalamos*] was an open hypaethral court, in which had stood in old days an olive-tree, which with his own hands Odysseus had cut short and fashioned into a post for his bed, building about the bed so made a chamber of stone and roofing it over” (Gardner 1882:279). This grey zone, here in the heart of the women's hall, identifies with the *mychos*, usually a room further beyond the *thalamos* that is the innermost section of the archetypal Homeric house. In any case, Odysseus' *lechos*, thus firmly connected to the earth via the olive tree, is charged with great significance, which Nanos Valaoritis claims is cryptographically deciphered in the form of the letter *Psi* (Ψ), the 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet, consisting of a U-shaped receptacle pierced centrally by a rooted stamen (Valaoritis 2012:90). Moreover, the same letter relates Odysseus' wit to Penelope's *pseudos* (ruse) that acrophonically names the respective Book in the *Odyssey* (*ib.* 2012:90).

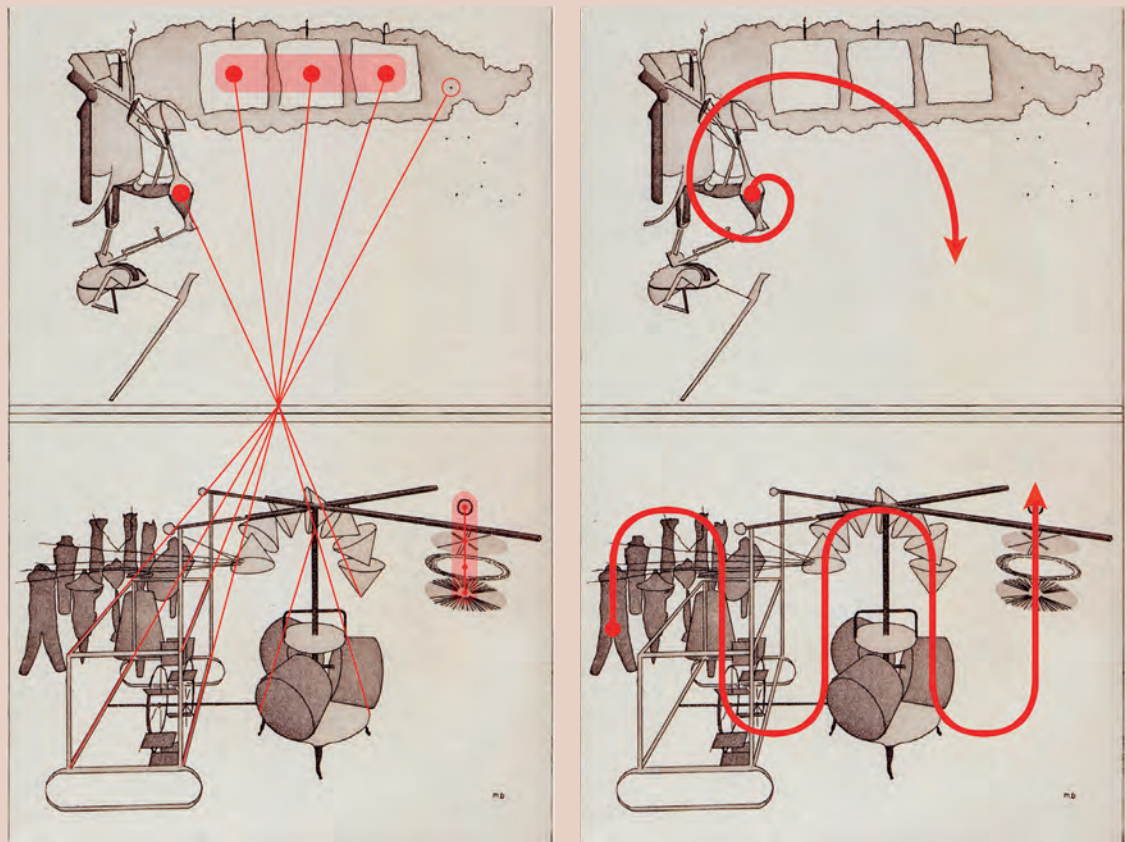


Nikos Engonopoulos (Greece, 1907-1985). *The Return of Odysseus*, 1947. Oil on canvas, 57 x 44. Private Collection.



Joseph Strick (USA, 1923-2010). Still from the *Penelope Episode* in *Ulysses*, 1967. Film, 01:12:00. London, UK: British Lion Films. | Richard Hamilton (England, 1922-2011). Detail from *The Heavtree of Stars*, 1998. Iris digital print on paper, 53 x 38. London, UK: Tate Gallery.

Such grey zone, as the *lechos* of Odysseus, is evoked in the *Ithaca* episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*, where Molly and Bloom, respectively described as "listener and narrator" (Joyce 1934:17.721), slept head to toe in their bed, as evidenced in Joseph Strick's film *Ulysses* (1967). Richard Hamilton's representation of the same scene further includes the old iron bedstead to separate the two sleepers, akin to the *Horizon's* dividing role on the *Glass*. The couple is shown to fall in a continuum yet be at opposite ends to one another, just like the two parts of Duchamp's *Glass*. Despite this dividing line, however, the couple use the same bed as a mutually shared space, which only temporarily brings together the couple that is usually apart for most of the day.



Digital renderings of Duchamp's *Glass*. Left: *Perspectival and Orientational Rendering*. | Right: *Flow of Energy Rendering*.

In closing, Duchamp devised the *Glass* with great sophistication, comparable to Homer's *Odyssey*. Though the *Bride's Domain* is perspectiveless, it appears that its elements are balanced or aligned via the centre's vanishing point with the perspective extensions from the *Bachelor Apparatus*. Duchamp also echoes the Homeric dualism of male/female powers by juxtaposing a masculine verticality, especially evidenced by the *Oculist Witnesses / Mandala* axis, with the feminine horizontality of the *Cinematic Blossoming's Draft Pistons*. He also designed the two parts of the *Glass* so that the action in each follows a different yet complementary dynamic – a *boustrophedón* (literally 'ox-turning') regular bi-directional flow for the Bachelors, which echoes their onanism and a logarithmic spiralling pattern of sequentially accelerating orientation for the Bride, which evokes organic evolution towards her catastrophe (see III.15).



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Bride, Aug. 1912*, Munich. Oil on canvas, 90 x 55. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | Digital rendering of Duchamp's *Bride* (1912), 2015.

In preparatory works for the *Glass*, it is clear that Duchamp likens his *Bride* to a queen. In her polysemy she can be the Christian queen of heaven, queen wasp, chess queen or the legendary queen of Ithaca. The *Bride* painting belongs to a series of studies that Duchamp made for the *Glass*, while in Munich in August 1912. “This is not the realistic interpretation of a bride”, he said, “but my concept of a bride expressed by the juxtaposition of mechanical elements and visceral forms.” (d’Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:263). Duchamp originally intended to transfer the image of the *Bride* and her *Apparatus* from this canvas to the *Glass* by photographic means. As this proved impractical, he copied onto the *Glass* their forms in black and white tones. Despite her unworldly appearance, a conflation of Duchamp’s published notes and drawings and the sketches in the *Posthumous Notes* enabled Henderson to propose in a detailed diagram the location of various anatomical elements of the *Bride* (see Henderson 1998:232.82) – *Eyes* (№1); *Mortice* (№2); *Filament* (№3); *Sex Cylinder* (№4); *Artery* (№5); *Pulse Needle* (№6); *Desire-Magneto* (№7); *Tympanum* (№8) – as well as the mechanical elements that form her *Apparatus* – *Arbor Type* (№9); *Reservoir of Love Gasoline* (№10); *Desire-Gear* (№11); *Motor* (№12); *Shaft* (№13).

Though all the aforementioned details ascertain her unique alienness, the *Bride* and her *Apparatus* detail of the *Glass* may conceptually respond to *Penelope* by the Siene painter Domenico Beccafumi, which sums up the queenhood Duchamp had in mind. First of all, the diadem crowning her hair signals her indisputable queenly stature. Beccafumi represented *Penelope* as an ethereal queen of heaven figure, standing in contraposto, seamlessly supported against a narrow upright loom. This particular loom – a fantastic creation with an *all’antica* base adorned with rams’ heads, grotesque masks and foliate feet – appears to be Penelope’s only steady point of reference, like the *Bride Apparatus*. Her left hand reveals the area on her textile from which she unweaves the *rinceau* design that matches her form onto a spindle in her other hand. The line of string connecting her to the loom echoes the various spindly elements connecting the *Bride* to her *Apparatus*. The act of unweaving could be seen as evidence of her “blank desire. (with a touch of malice)” that Duchamp referred to in his notes (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:39.3) – Penelope’s intention to keep her suitors at bay. She appears wearing a tunic in a palette similar to the *Bride*’s

Domenico Beccafumi (Montaperti, 1486-1551). *Penelope*, c. 1514. Oil on panel, 84 x 48. Venice, IT: Pinacoteca Manfrediana.



body – the yellow green hues of the queen (*ib.* 1973:57) – evoking the acidic colour of a queen wasp, which makes her at the same time alluring and fearsome. The folds of this tunic accentuate and evoke her erogenous zones – breast and pubes – yet, the bejewelled girdle securely denotes her marital chastity. The bare, spiky tree that punctuates the background landscape reflects her *noli me tangere* (touch me not) stance.

The half-moon feature of Duchamp's *Bride* cannot be overestimated. The angle of the Bride's hemispherical element to her columnar shaft is meant to "express the necessary and sufficient twinkle of the eye" (*ib.* 1973:48). Duchamp's eventual decision to fix that angle at $22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ was influenced by the "Greek heads $\frac{3}{4}$ turned./imitated by Coysevox" (Matisse 1983:104). This statement, further to its ironic reference to Antoine Coysevox's (1640-1720) Baroque style after the antique, reveals Duchamp's interest to convey emotion with geometric expression. Homer did all in his capacity to construct and present Penelope to his readers as an ultraconservative wife whose loyalty is tried at the verge of clinical depression. Her sacred quest is to remain faithful to her original husband and refuse the advances of any other man.

At the same time, however, the Bride is also lustful. She has free reign of her body as a hypersensitive mobile. Despite holding onto her *Apparatus*, which is fixed at an upper point, she swings freely in a 360° circle. "This [immobile] arbor-type is a kind of spinal column and should be the support for the blossoming into the bride's voluntary stripping" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:44.11). Apparently, Duchamp envisaged his Bride as a naked pole dancer alluring the male audience in a strip club. Her aim is to increase male desire at any expense. In a similar rationale, Homer treats Penelope's loom as the Bride's arbor-type pole. He also has Athena put it into Penelope's head to make an appearance before her suitors. The goddess gave her extra stature and beauty to inflame their hearts. So, when Penelope appeared to them, "Their knees gave way and the hearts in them were bemused with passion, / and each one prayed for the privilege of lying beside her" (Lattimore 1965:18.212-213). She spoke to the suitors and led them on by telling them that Odysseus had instructed her to take a new husband if he should fail to return before Telemachus began growing facial hair. She then tricked them, to the silent delight of Odysseus, into bringing her gifts by claiming that any suitor worth his salt would try to win her hand by giving things to her instead of taking what is rightfully hers.



Vector rendering of the Staunton Chess King and Queen.

Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *King and Queen*, 1918-1919, Buenos Aires. Wood, H:10.1 / 10.3. Villiers-sous-Grez, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives.

Digital rendering of Duchamp's *Bride* (1912).

Owing to Duchamp's lifelong fascination with the game of chess, it is tempting to relate the Bride with the queen piece of chess. Isolating the *Bride* from Duchamp's namesake painting, placing her form upright and straightening her foreshortened elements, one arrives at a figure with the continuous profile qualities of the chess queen – slenderly tapering body over bulging loins and crowned with a tiara. The queen is the game's second tallest piece after the king, who owes his height to the cross on top of his crown. However, in Duchamp's chess set, the *King* is shorter than the *Queen* because he omitted the cross contrary to standard practice, saying with a laugh, "That was my declaration of anticlericalism" (Schwarz 1969:667). The object of chess is to trap the opponent's King so that his escape is not possible, in which case a checkmate occurs. Although the king is the most important piece, he ironically also happens to be the weakest in the game. He can move one square in any direction (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) unless the square is already occupied by a friendly piece or the move would place the king in check. Unlike the other chess pieces, the queen is the only female and as such is allowed the absolute freedom to move any number of vacant squares in a straight line in any

direction forwards, backwards, left, right, or diagonally. Therefore, her exceptional freedom turns the queen to the most powerful piece in the game and makes her reign supreme. Pushing such a freedom to extreme, Duchamp chose to suspend his *Bride* in the air (the glass) above the supposed chessboard.



Anonymous (Magna Grecia, c. 4th BC). Detail from *Eros Enagonios*, c. 380 BC. Red-figure amphora, H:57. Sydney, AU: Nicholson Museum.
| Anonymous (Sicily, c. 4th BC). *Pensive Penelope*, c. 350 BC. Gold finger-ring, 2 x 2. London, UK: British Museum.

Penelope is known to be a *donna mobile* (fickle lady), just waiting to make up her mind. Following the conventional representation of *Eros Enagonios* (literally ‘Eros in Agony’), who is anxious about the future, she is often represented seated in a similarly pensive manner, forming a right triangle with her body – the tilted torso is the hypotenuse between upright arm and flat thigh. Her indecision whether to accept widowhood and remarry or continue waiting for Odysseus by the side of their son is introduced from the epic’s start (Lattimore 1965:1.249-250) and characterises her throughout the narrative. Penelope’s indeterminacy is best summed up in Telemachus’ words to Eumaeus, “my mother’s heart is divided in her and ponders two ways, / whether to remain here with me and look after the household, / keep faith with her husband’s bed and regard the voice of the people, / or go away at last with the best man of the Achaeans / who pays her court in her palace and brings her the most presents.” (*ib.* 1965:16.73-77). This indeterminacy endows the *Odyssey* with all its charm from both an aesthetic and an intellectual viewpoint. As Katz argues, “This disruption of the fixity of Penelope’s character [...] functions, like Odysseus’ disguise, as a strategy of estrangement [...] calling into question the relation between semblance and being, between disguise and truth.” (Katz 1991:193). The defining moment for Penelope is when she hands over the bow for the trial, because she thus seems to be giving her final farewell to Odysseus himself (Jones 1998:194). Her indeterminacy comes to an end at the crucial moment when Penelope admits to the suitors that she is ready to follow the winner of the archery challenge, giving up her past, “forsaking this house / where I was a bride, a lovely place and full of good living. / I think that even in my dreams I shall never forget it.” (Lattimore 1965:21.77-79).

Penelope’s indeterminacy caused the theme of delay, which plays a significant role in Homer’s *Odyssey*. According to the plot, Penelope was a wife with son waiting twenty years for the return of her husband, during which she had a hard time snubbing marriage proposals from 108 odious suitors. Upon his *incognito* return, Odysseus found that Penelope had remained faithful. She had devised the *Weaving Ruse* (see II.6) to delay her suitors in the last three years of her patient waiting. Penelope waited in her confined space during an allegorically great length of time in-between Odysseus’ departure and his anticipated return; weaving and unweaving the cloth, her memories, her desires, her own self. During the first ten years of the Trojan War’s supposed length, the waiting sowed doubt and made her wonder what it is she was actually waiting for. The news about the end of the Trojan War re-defined the purpose of her waiting for another ten long years, which she also endured. But her patience had come to its limits.

Antoine Bourdelle's statue of *Penelope waiting for Odysseus* of 1912 enacted its succinct title, which is incised with block capital letters in Greek "ΠΕΝΕΛΟΠΗ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑ ΠΡΟΣΜΕΝΟΥΣΑ" along a single wavy line at the rear of the figure's standing ground. The rectangular base on which Bourdelle presented it at the 1912 Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux Arts is inseparable from such a work, which despite its sinuous form emphasises the structural specificity of stability. Far from being a scenographic expedient, the prominent and pure base accentuates the sinuous movement of the composition, while conferring to the work its stature of solidity. Despite its curved form and flowing design throughout, everything on this sculpture serves to create an effect of stability. A living pillar of fidelity, the wise Penelope has the concreteness of architecture. Like the fluting in a Doric column, the tunic's folds cling to the generous forms, containing the amplitude of its volumes. The stiff folds reveal the body's advanced right leg, slightly bent to counteract the swaying of the figure. The composition conveys both a sense of long-lasting fervour and the pain of faithfully waiting for the return of a loved one. Eyes shut, her head resting on her hand, she thinks of her husband and persists in hoping for his return. So, Bourdelle's *Penelope* is, on a formal as on a symbolic level, a melancholy incarnation of endless waiting, loving and painful, formulated under the dictation of mythology.



Antoine Bourdelle (France, 1861-1929). *Pénélope attendant Ulysse*, 1912. Plaster, 240 x 84 x 71. Paris, FR: Musée Bourdelle. | Detail from the rear of *Pénélope* inscribed in Greek "ΠΕΝΕΛΟΠΗ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑ ΠΡΟΣΜΕΝΟΥΣΑ".

Penelope's waiting may have been in Duchamp's mind when he was thinking of the *Glass*. In *The Green Box* notes, he advised himself to use "Delay in Glass" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:26) as a kind of subtitle for his work. Duchamp was drawn to Bergson's notion of *la durée* (*duration*), which was discussed in his doctoral thesis *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, first published in 1889 (Hopkins 1998:37). He understood *la durée* as an intuitively apprehended process bound up with the experience of consciousness, in opposition to the Newtonian conception of time as an entity external to the experiencing subject (Lacey 1989:29). Therefore, Duchamp's aim was to create a delay "not so much in the different meanings in which delay can be taken, but rather in their indecisive reunion" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:26). Rather than emulate Bourdelle's literal expression of the longed-for reunion between Penelope and Odysseus, Duchamp was thinking of the indecisive reunion of different meanings. With "Delay", Duchamp introduced to art for the first time the concept of postponement or deferral of an action, which affects time. Such a delay may be perceived as a chronological interval either anytime between the start and end of the work's actual fabrication from the viewpoint of the artist or the final work's representation of a time continuum for the beholder's experience. The issue of delay as deferral (postponement) eventually emerged to be of considerable philosophical significance. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) coined the term *différance*, deliberately misspelling the homophonous word *difference*, to play on the fact that the French verb *différer* means both 'to defer' and 'to differ' (Derrida 1982). By this term, Derrida gestured at the paradox that governs the production of textual meaning. Though for Swiss semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) the sign results from the association of the signifier with the signified, for Derrida, there is a continual and indefinite deferral, as the signified can never be achieved. Derrida's claim that the signifier and the signified are severed completely and irrevocably by deferral echoes the unhappy premonition of Homer's *Odyssey* (see III.15), as well as Duchamp's choice to keep the *Bride* and the *Bachelors* joined at the *Horizon*, but forever apart.

Odysseus' legendary delay is evoked by Duchamp's *Dust Breeding*, a bred readymade photograph by Man Ray of the back of the *Glass* lying flat, showing the accumulation of debris on it. According to the inscription on the back of the original print (Jedermann Collection), it was taken in Duchamp's studio at 1947 Broadway, New York, several months after his return from Paris in January 1920. In these months the glass was abandoned, gathering dust from the open window of his studio and bits of tissue and cotton were initially used to clean it, but in vain. According to Man Ray, the photograph was taken during the dinner hour with artificial light. He and Duchamp went out for a snack, leaving the camera to take a long exposure (Man Ray 1988:79). It was later published by André Breton in *Littérature* on 1 October 1922 with the caption, "Voici le domaine de Rose Sélavy / Comme il est aride – Comme il est fertile / Comme il est joyeux – Comme il est triste!" (Behold the domain of Rose Sélavy / How arid it is – How fertile it is – / How joyous it is – How sad it is!) The poetic text reflects Penelope's physical and emotional state. The arid domain of Rose Sélavy is evocative of Odysseus' nuptial bed left abandoned to the elements during the twenty years of his parting from Penelope. This is paralleled in *Ulysses* with the arid relation between Molly and Bloom owing to the latter's lengthy abstinence from sex with her. The concluding photo credit, "Vue prise en aéroplane / Par Man Ray 1921" (View taken from an airplane / By Man Ray 1921), typically brings the myth to date. Soon after the photograph was taken, Duchamp affixed the dust to the Sieves, cleaned the rest of the surface and sandwiched the design with another pane.

Of course, the official ending of the *Odyssey* is affirmative. This affirmation may be hinted at on the *Glass* with a possible pun in the final word of the title "même", which may be interpreted as *m'aime* (loves me) in the sense that Odysseus loves her (see III.14). Likewise, a bittersweet taste permeates the end of Joyce's *Ulysses*, as Molly lies in bed reminiscing about life, lovers and Bloom snoring in the darkness next to her. She has hardly been loyal and faithful, but she does still want to hold on to her 'Odysseus'.



VOICI LE DOMAINE DE ROSE SÉLAVY
COMME IL EST ARIDE – COMME IL EST FERTILE –
COMME IL EST JOYEUX – COMME IL EST TRISTE !

VUE PRISE EN AÉROPLANE
PAR MAN RAY – 1921.

Man Ray
(USA, 1890-1976).
Dust Breeding (1920)
published in *Littérature*,
1 Oct. 1922.

III.6

Duchamp's *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries* as Penelope's Suitors

Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
Dreams That Money Can Buy:
Narcissus, 1947.
Colour film, 01:39:00.
New York, NY: Films
International of America.



The lower part of the *Glass* associatively brings to mind the ancient concept of the underworld. According to Greek mythology, Hades itself was described as being beneath the earth, a dark counterpart to the brightness of Mount Olympus and was the kingdom of the dead that corresponded to the kingdom of the gods. Hades was also a realm made solely for the dead and was invisible to the living. Therefore, the passing from one realm to the other was possible only under metaphysical circumstances that involved transubstantiation, as evidenced on the *Glass*. Of course, Hades played a great role in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus undertook the dangerous voyage to the underworld for *nekylia* (*necromancy*), that is information about the means to return home to Ithaca, which is essentially a process of self-awareness. The reader of *Ulysses* also quickly becomes aware of the omnipresence of the “man in the brown macintosh”, an allegory of the god of the underworld, in various passages (Joyce 1934:10.251; 12.327; 13.369; 15.475, 500).

The earliest mention of the soul in Greek literature is Homer's morbid portrayal of the unhappy shadowy existence of the dead in Hades. According to Homer, man is *soma* (body) and *psyche* (soul). While Homer recognised the distinction of body and soul, he conceived of them as forming a unity (the dualistic dialectic of body and soul was developed by Orphism, who depicted the soul as a demon of divine nature and the body as a prison, a tomb, a place of expiation). Therefore, the soul is hardly conceived as possessing a substantial existence of its own. It inhabits the body as vessel. For as long as man is alive, his soul, like a vitalising fluid, runs all parts of the body and renders them alive. After death, the body wears out, while the soul severed from the body becomes mere pale shadow, incapable of energetic life, being a mindless and meaningless existence in the underworld. Even so, the soul becomes a phantom

created by a god in the semblance of its hosting body at the moment of death (Vernant 1991:186). Once in Hades, the soul can only regain vitality and memory by drinking blood (Lattimore 1965:11.25). It disappears like smoke, in the manner of ghosts, if someone attempts to touch it (*ib.* 1965:11.206). The dreary Homeric afterlife, where everyone shares the same bleak fate, remained current until Plato's times when the soul was elevated from a materialistically conceived double to a dematerialised divine being, of a higher nature than the body; the body's lust of flesh turns it into a dreadful prison for the soul (Plato 1966:Phaedo 82e-83a).

René Magritte
(Belgium, 1898-1967).
The Healer, 1936.
Gouache on paper, 48 x 31.
Courtesy of Christie's,
New York, NY.



The unitarian and dualistic views of the body and soul matter are eloquently exemplified by two different yet related works. The former Homeric view features in Hans Richter's *Narcissus* section of his film *Dreams That Money Can Buy* of 1947. In his own autobiographical dream, Joe finds that his playmates around the poker table conceal a cage emitting a strange gas (sodium on contact with water and chlorine bursts into flame emitting a green poisonous gas) under their clothes, doubtless alluding to the evil in these mates' souls, but further informed by the poison gas used in both World Wars. The latter Platonic view is manifest in René Magritte's *The Healer* of 1936, where the old man's bust under his cape reveals a birdcage with door open to form a sill that is host to a couple of white doves. Clearly Magritte used the doves as allusive to the sitter's benevolent, divine and pure soul. This contrivance comes in sharp contrast to the way Homer portrays the soul of Penelope's slain suitors, as “bats in the depth of an awful cave” (Lattimore 1965:24.6). Besides, it is interesting that both of these contemporary peers of Duchamp rendered the core of the human body as a cage. On the one hand, this solution brings to mind Duchamp's *Why Not*

Sneeze Rose Sélavy? of 1921. More significantly, however, Richter's gas emitting cages evoke Duchamp's *Nine Malic Moulds* of 1914-1915, which reduce the *Bachelors* to an assortment of metal casts containing gas. In the awareness of Duchampian humour, one is tempted to think of gas in this case as flatulence, colloquially ‘fart’.

Peter Jones, commentator of Lattimore's translation of the *Odyssey*, wrote about Book 16, "Homer continues to manoeuvre his pieces skillfully into position" (Jones 1998:147). He referred to Odysseus, Telemachus, Penelope, Eumaeus and the suitors as chess pieces after a strategic plan. As a matter of fact, the *Nine Malic Moulds* were related to the pawns of chess, which stood for the commonality (Naumann, Bailey and Shahade 2009:71). When they were by one less, they were compared to the eight vocations into which the 13th century Dominican monk Jacobus de Cessolis (c.1250-1322) subdivided them – labourers and farmers, smiths, weavers and notaries, merchants, physicians, innkeepers, city guards and ribalds and gamblers. Of course, Duchamp updated the vocations of his pawns – Priest, Department Store Delivery Boy, Gendarme, Cuirassier, Policeman, Undertaker, Flunky, Busboy and ultimately Stationmaster – to better suit contemporary society. As the vocations of the *Nine Malic Moulds* are discernible by their hats, each medieval piece was recognizable by the attributes of its trade, as shown in the frontispiece from a late 15th century French translation of *The Moralised Game of Chess* (the woodcut's upper tier is occupied by the two knights and two bishops, while the king and queen are playing chess under the gaze of the personified rooks in the central cartouche). It is worth noting that Cessolis wrote his treatise between 1275 and 1300, a time of political instability, as a guide to proper behaviour on the framework of the chessboard, to describe an ideal society through the medium of the relatively new game of chess. The references of all the chess pieces that buttress his arguments were from classical and biblical literature. The title of his book, *On the Customs of Men and Their Noble Action with Reference to the Game of Chess*, relates to Homer's epic vision whereby *kleos* (glory) is the only thing that really is imperishable, the only meaningful form of immortality. So, heroes are those who, like Achilles, choose to do glorious deeds.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Nine Malic Moulds, 1914-1915.
Oil, lead wire and sheet lead on glass
(cracked in 1915), mounted between
two glass plates and framed with
varnished steel, 66 x 101.
Paris, FR: Centre Pompidou,
Musée national d'art moderne.



Anonymous (France, c. 15th).
The Moralised Game of Chess,
c. 1480.
Frontispiece, 150 x 100.
Paris, FR: Bibliothèque
de l'Arsenal.

Unlike Homer's vision and Cessolis' ideals, however, Duchamp's *Moulds* seem to be informed by Penelope's suitors, the nasty group of Achaean bachelors led by Antinous (whose name literally translates as 'unwitting') that settled in the Ithacan palace and besieged its mistress, having in mind "evil deeds" (Lattimore 1965:16.381). Reintroducing them after a long absence (since Book 4) in Book 16, Homer presents the suitors remaining true to their type as ruthless (*ib.* 1965:16.370-373, 383-386), their power based on naked force, without regard to community sanctions (*ib.* 1965:16.361-362, 376-382) or the wishes of the woman they pursue (*ib.* 1965:16.385-386). Being after corporeal satisfaction and material gain, these worthless suitors are in tune with Duchamp's *Bachelors*. What is of interest is that their author seems to identify with them all. Bailey finds that the Bachelors act as repositories for the artist's own fragmented identities (Naumann, Bailey and Shahade 2009:72). This fact, he claims, is manifest in a sequence of Hans Richter's film *Dadascope* of 1961, showing the artist smoking a pipe, then gradually fading out his picture from view, leaving only the background of the *Nine Malic Moulds* (*ib.* 2009:73). Amelia Jones described this sequence as emphasising "the effect of Duchamp being 'one' with his work – and, in particular, with the bachelors" (Jones 1998:126). Moreover, the Bachelors' shell-like outlook is a reversal by comparison to the Bride, who appears flayed, mere content. The point Duchamp seems to make about the Bachelors is that males are essentially similar, as opposed to the



Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
Dadascope: Carte Postale,
1956-1961; premiered 9 March 1965.
Film, 39:08.
Paris, FR: Centre Georges Pompidou.

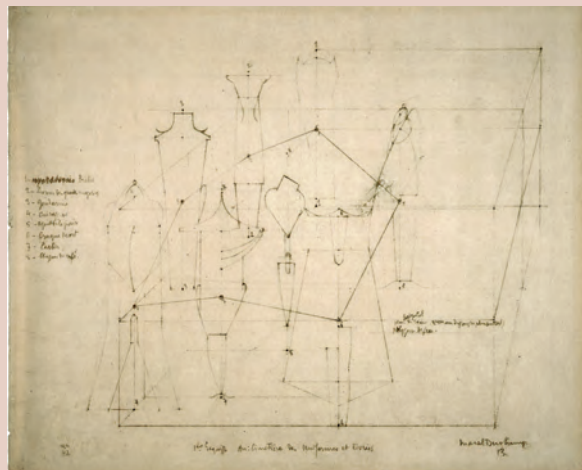
female who is unique. This feature closely echoes the point Samuel Butler makes about the *Odyssey*; that Odysseus and the other male characters – namely, Alcinous, Nestor and Menelaus – are made ridiculous and are basically all the same (Butler 1897:115), whereas female characters appear to be sensible and in charge (*ib.* 1897:107).



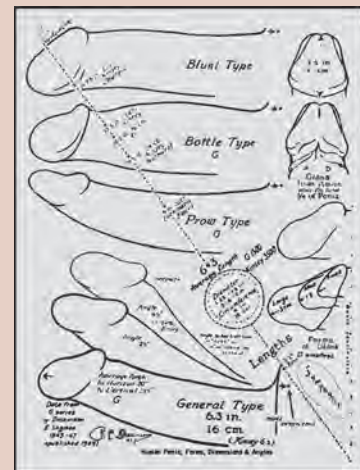
John William Waterhouse
(Italy, 1849-1917).
Penelope and the Suitors, 1912.
Oil on canvas, 131 x 191.
Scotland, UK: Aberdeen
Art Gallery & Museums.

The subject of Penelope's worthless suitors appealed to the decadent movement that flourished in France, but also England, in the 19th century. John William Waterhouse's *Penelope and the Suitors* of 1912 expresses the sense of moral decadence that coloured the turn of the century historical view of Homeric antiquity. The painting portrays the depraved lifestyle of the local noblemen, who had no better business than to frequent the supposed widow's palace until she would give in to their desires. Antinous said to Penelope, "whatever gift any Achaean wishes to bring here, / take it; it is not honourable to refuse the giving. / We will not go back to our own estates, nor will we go elsewhere, / until you marry whichever Achaean you fancy." (Lattimore 1965:18,286-289). Amongst the presents, Homer mentions Antinous' robe with golden pins, Eurymachus' golden necklace and Eurydamas' radiant earrings. In his picture, Waterhouse evidently portrayed these three suitors grouped at one of the windows of the great *thalamos* (women's hall) where Penelope and her maids are engaged with the loom. Excepting the suitors' indiscreet gaze, their invasion of the female *ábaton* (restricted area) is further evoked by their display of presents, especially the outstretched hand of a suitor offering her blossoms, which, in this case, is akin to phallic exhibitionism. In a gesture of disarming embarrassment, Penelope avoids noticing them, while biting on the twine, as if to fix a fault with it. The two maids and the palace's bard are witness to Penelope's anxiety and the scene's intensity.

Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries,
1913, Neuilly.
Graphite on tracing paper, 33 x 42.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art.

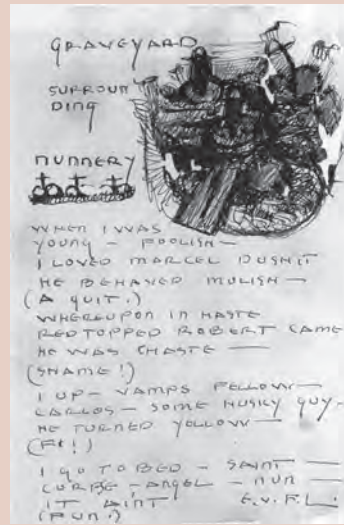


Robert Latou Dickinson
(USA, 1861-1950).
Human Penis; Forms, Dimensions & Angles, 1949.
Book illustration in the
Atlas of Human Sex Anatomy.

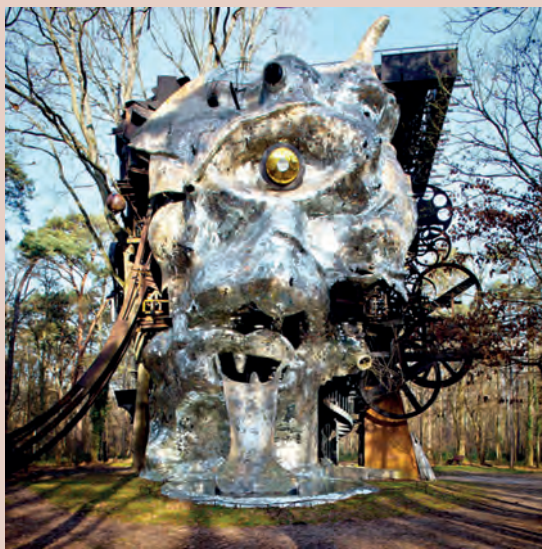


Hamilton described the *Nine Malic Moulds* as "hollow shells" (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:62), which relates to the Homeric state of soulless bodies after death. Duchamp's early 1913 study of the Moulds, eight of them before the Stationmaster was added, was entitled *Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries*. Drawn in perspective with the position of the head and feet established, "Each of the 8 malic forms is built above and below a common horizontal plane, the plane of sex cutting them at the pnt. of sex" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:51). Therefore, Duchamp envisaged placing the eight Moulds in space along one imaginary horizontal plane that would be based on their penis, regardless of their height. Placing too much emphasis on the Moulds' genitals, the "cutting" likely refers to their impotent state or castrated fate. This idea may relate to the concept of a 'castration complex' that Freud developed in his 1908 article *On the Sexual Theories of Children*, where he suggested that the male child becomes aware of the physical differences between genders and on the one hand assumes that the female's penis has been removed and on the other hand fears that his father will also emasculate him as a punishment for desiring his mother (Freud 1959). This obsession of men with their penis causes them to identify with it, as a supreme emblem of their manhood. This explains why the adjective 'malic' (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:48), a pun conflating the meaning of the words *male* and *phallic*, suggests that each Mould is but another type of phallus. Therefore, the *Nine Malic Moulds* are like an assortment of penises, preceding the earliest known scientific illustration of the wide variety of the human penis' forms, dimensions and angles appearing in Robert Latou Dickinson's *Atlas of Human Sexuality* of 1949.

The phallic Bachelors bring to mind Else von Freytag-Loringhoven's manuscript poem *Graveyard Surrounding Nunnery* of 1921. Having scared away men of the avant-garde with her uncompromising notions of uninhibited life and love, she drew a graveyard of penises and penned her feelings, "When I was / Young – foolish – / I loved Marcel Duchamp / He behaved mulish / (A quit) / Whereupon in haste / Redtopped Robert came / He was chaste / (Shame!) / I up – vamps fellow – / Carlos – some husky guy / He turned yellow / (Fi!) / I go to bed – saint – / Corpse - angel – nun – / It ain't / (Fun.)" The Baroness' *Graveyard* poem, sent to *The Little Review*, depicted a nest of male genitals entombed in a graveyard, a Dada epitaph to her failed heterosexual love affairs that condemned her to the abstinence of a nun (Gammel 2002:269). She mock-poetically identified the castrated genitals of Marcel Duchamp as "Marcel Dushit", Robert Logan as "Redtopped Robert" and William Carlos Williams as "Carlos".



Else von Freytag-Loringhoven (Germany, 1874-1927). *Graveyard Surrounding Nunnery*, 1921. Manuscript Poem. Milwaukee, WI: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Golda Meir Library, Archives, Papers of *The Little Review*.



A metonymic rendering of the *Nine Malic Moulds* is found on Jean Tinguely's *Cyclops* of 1969-1991, a gigantic walk-in culture station in Milly-la-Forêt, south of Paris. On the third level of the *Cyclops*, behind his eye, Tinguely designed a small theatre made up of nine seats facing a stage. The seats are all reclaimed from dumps and are different from one another. In the catalogue is written, "Visitors are invited to sit down on the oarsman's seat, the tractor seat, the wooden chair and various stools, some more comfortable than others. Oddly enough, these seats move about [rising and falling at various speeds], teeter dangerously and throb like vibrating dildos." (Canal 2007:28). Tinguely recounted, "All these seats on which you are seating are driven from beneath by the *Méta-Harmonie* [musico-mechanical machinery on the second level]. They make you spend time in a hilarious situation. You are placed in a ridiculous position, you move forward, you almost fall off your seats and this is the main action. The action is not on the stage, the action is in your minds and in your situation of tossed spectators." (extract from Huwiler and Vizner 1987). On the stage the story written by Tinguely is enacted, "I wrote a play, which is the love affair between a hammer and a bottle, which is subjected to extraordinary light effects. A large, transparent bottle, with lovely colours and in this bottle full of water, you can feel the water vibrating. The hammer, through a hammer's voice starts very softly declaring its love, ever louder and more thunderous, for the bottle. It rises up and switches to a virile state, ever larger through its shadow. It's automatic. It's a short play. Each performance calls for a new bottle, that's all! The bottle vibrates, it feels the love that is coming towards it. And the hammer rises up... and in the end, it's really a declaration of total love, the hammer loses control of itself and breaks the bottle. And everyone's feet get wet." (*ib.* 1987). Tinguely, author of the scenario, had wanted the little theatre to offer 'pure and simple' shows and everyone to come up with their own ideas. But in practice this became too complicated. After Tinguely's death, in 1994, Philippe Bouveret directed this play, which is enacted automatically every two minutes (Canal 2007:30). It is worth noting that the protagonist of the theatre is actually a 'demijohn', the king of bottles, best used for wine. The English term *demijohn* (semi-John) is a pun on the French version *dame-jeanne* (Lady Jane). Taking the opportunity of *The Cyclops* to pay homage to artists no longer alive at the time of its construction – Marcel Duchamp amongst Yves Klein, Louise Nevelson and Kurt Schwitters – it is quite likely that the nine seats are surrogates for the *Nine Malic Moulds*.

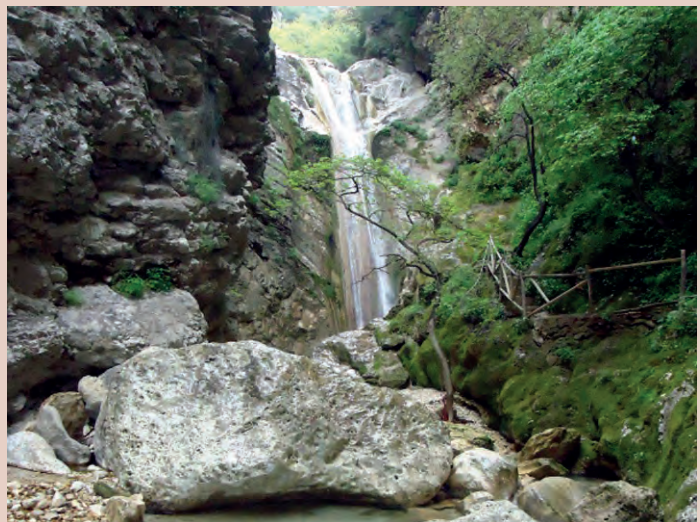
Jean Tinguely (Switzerland, 1925-1991). *The Cyclops: The Monster in the Forest*, 1969-1994, Milly-la-Forêt. Mixed media, H:2250.

Jean Tinguely (*ib.*) and Philippe Bouveret (France, b. 1960). *The Cyclops: Theatre - Seats and Stage*, 1987/1994. Courtesy of Association Le Cyclop, Milly-la-Forêt, FR.

III.7

Duchamp's *Waterfall* as the *Melanhydros Spring, Ithaca*

Homer took the opportunity to fully describe ancient Ithaca when Athena disguised as a young herdsman responds to Odysseus' enquiry and tells him where he is – “You are some innocent, O stranger, or else you have come from / far away, if you ask about this land, for it is not / so nameless as all that. There are indeed many who know it, / whether among those who live toward the east and the sunrise, / or those who live up and away toward the mist and darkness. See now, / this is a rugged country and not for the driving of horses, / but neither is it so unpleasant, though not widely shapen; / for there is abundant grain for bread grown here, it produces / wine and there is always rain and the dew to make it / fertile; it is good to feed goats and cattle; and timber / is there of all sort and watering places good through the seasons; / so that, stranger, the name of Ithaca has gone even to Troy, though they say that is very far from Achaian country.” (Lattimore 1965:13.237-249). Such a description is worth quoting in full because it gave the eminent German archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1853-1940) extra reason to identify ancient Ithaca with modern Lefkada. Near the city of Ithaca, Homer described two water sources, namely the *melanhydros* (dark-watered) natural spring at some distance from the palace (*ib.* 1965:20.158) and the *callirhoe* (sweet-running) fountain, “made of stone; and there the townspeople went for their water; / Ithacus had made this and Neritus and Polycctor; / and around it was a grove of black poplars, trees that grow by / water, all in a circle and there was cold water pouring / down from the rock above;” (*ib.* 1965:17.206-210). Dörpfeld identified the built fountain with today's *Mavroneri* (literally ‘Blackwater’) in Palaeochori, Lefkada. He claimed that it has been called so through the years because of the fact that its water contains gypsum, which tarnishes the surrounding rock and soil (Dörpfeld 1927:127). Nevertheless, Dörpfeld erroneously concluded that the *melanhydros* and *kallirhoos* was one and the same spring.



Wilhelm Dörpfeld (Germany, 1853-1940). *The Great Dimossari Waterfall at Nydri, Lefkada, 1905.* Athens, GR: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut - DAI. | Author's photograph of *The Great Dimossari Waterfall at Nydri, Lefkada, 2015.*

As a matter of fact, the high mountains that abound in Lefkada cause water to cascade through the hilly terrain and be channelled in natural or artificial storages, which is one of the principal reasons why a major part of the island is lush with greenery. The Homeric *Melanhydros Spring* is identified with the Great Dimossari Waterfall of the namesake river, on the outskirts of Nydri, Lefkada (Doukas 1998:173-188). This waterfall springs out from the earth high above the ground and dominates the surrounding landscape, which inspiringly combines the familiar with the exotic. What is more, before feeding the *Mavroneri Fountain* and the Nydri plain (Dörpfeld documented extensive remnants of ancient terracotta pipes traversing the Nydri plain), its water was collected to power an old water mill. Nowadays, however, the ground absorbs the water and makes this water mill obsolete.

Though the *Waterfall* is clearly specified both in various notes of *The Green Box* (especially *Note 124* of c. 1913) and *The Large Glass Completed*, Duchamp chose to imply it rather than render it visible on his actual work. However, during a vacation with Mary Reynolds in Switzerland in August 1946, he was fascinated by Le Forestay waterfall at Bellevue, a small hamlet near Chexbres. The chance combination of the waterfall, water mill and shooting range – all key elements of the *Glass* – may explain why Duchamp was so powerfully drawn to this site (Taylor 2009:67). This very encounter seems to be



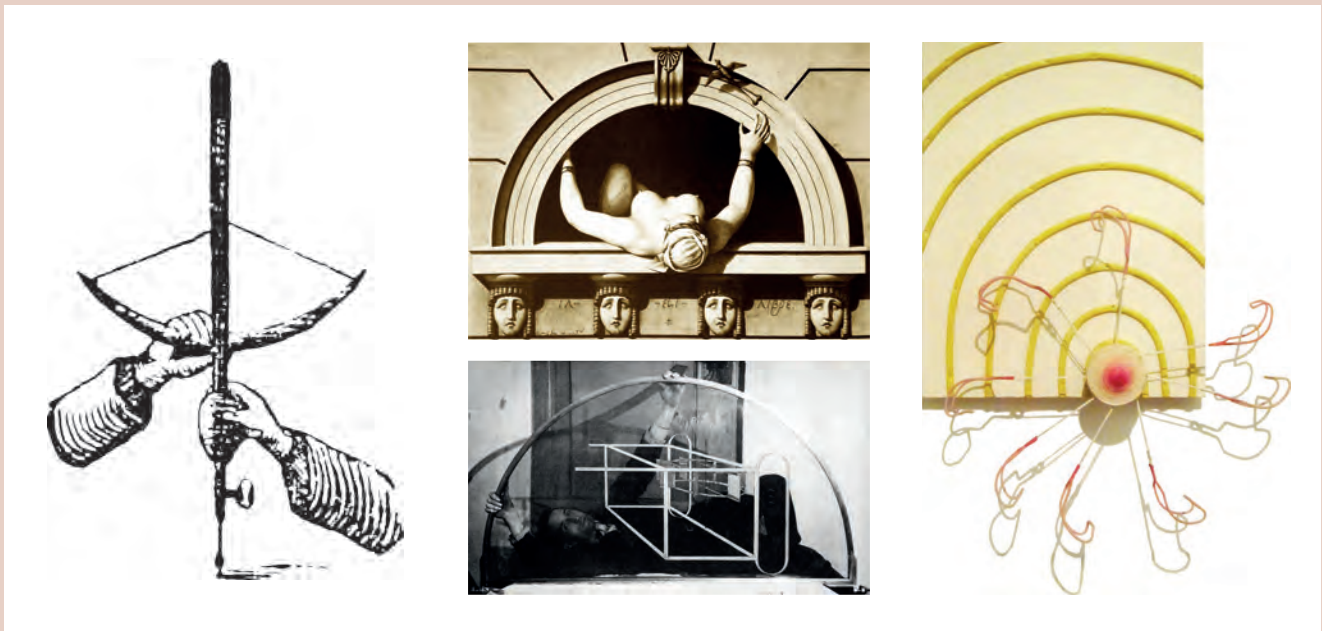
Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Backdrop of *Étant Donnés* (1944-1966), 1959. Collage of cut gelatin silver photographs, with paint, graphite, crayon, ink and adhesive on plywood, 67 x 99. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art. | Marcel Duchamp (*ib.*). View of *Étant Donnés* through the peephole, 1944-1966. Mixed media assemblage, 243 x 178 x 125. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

the source of inspiration for *Étant donnés* of 1946-1966, Duchamp's last masterwork that is considered to be a reversal of his first one, the *Glass*. Both these works are alternative views of the same event – a female nude's relation to a male audience. The former occurs in an unseen, abstract realm of *numena*; the latter occurs in the visible, real world of *phenomena*. In *The White Box* of 1967, containing notes from 1914-1923, Duchamp made a distinction between the virtuality of an "apparition" that was the *Glass* and the physical actuality of an "appearance" that was to be *Étant donnés* (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:84-86). Henderson suggested that the sex-over-machine of *Étant donnés* is a reversal of the machine-over-sex of the *Glass* (Henderson 1998:217). What is more, the waterfall, which is invisible in the *Glass*, becomes a focal point by animation in *Étant donnés*. Behind the backdrop, an electrical motor revolves a perforated disk before a lightbulb, to create the illusion of a twinkling waterfall with the effect of sparkle (Taylor 2009:114). The entire setting – the nude figure, the waterfall, the sky, the clouds, the gas lamp – is artificial, a *trompe l'oeil* (optical illusion), purely contrived visual trickery, reminiscent of Odysseus' resourcefulness.

Duchamp used the seven photographs he took of Le Forestay waterfall, with different viewpoints of the hillside and cascading water, to produce a hand-painted landscape collage as a backdrop to *Étant donnés*. The reason he used collage was to make an eclectic assortment of his images that would offer an ideal glimpse into the Arcadian qualities of Elysian Fields, quite like the environment of the *Melanhydros* spring that Homer had in mind. "In the hyperreal, luminous panorama, mist hangs over a forested sunlit hillside with intensely coloured foliage" (*ib.* 2009:263). It must be noted that, though pure water from such a precious spring had to be used after the slaughter of suitors to exorcise evil and restore order in Odysseus' palace (Lattimore 1965:22.439), Duchamp's idyllic watery landscape glorifies eros. In his *tableaux vivant*, where the waterfall cascades perpetually over rocks into a lake below, prevails a female nude unabashedly sprawling her legs to reveal her genitalia in the manner of Courbet's *The Origin of the World* of 1866, which Duchamp probably first appreciated at the Paris apartment of Jacques and Sylvia Lacan in 1958 (Taylor 2009:112). In the tradition of Duchamp, American artist Jeff Koons created *Landscape Waterfall* in 2007. Conflating the key focal points of *Étant donnés* – waterfall and vulva – he offered a controversial work that forces spectators to re-examine the harmonious potential of the relation between nature and sexuality.



Jeff Koons (USA, b. 1955). *Landscape Waterfall*, 2007. Oil on canvas, 274 x 213. London, UK: Gagosian Gallery.



Woodcut illustration of the *Bow Drill* in Steve Schuler's *Homer and Hand Tools: A Woodworking Odyssey*, 2010. | Jean-Jacques Lequeu (France, 1757-1825). *Il est libre*, 1798-1799. Ink and wash on paper, 37 x 49. Paris, FR: Bibliothèque nationale de France. | Man Ray (USA, 1890-1976). Duchamp with *Glider including Water Mill*, 1917, Paris. Gelatin silver print, 9 x 15. Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum. | Eva Hesse (Germany, 1936-1970). *Eighter from Decatur*, 1965, Kettwig an der Ruhr. Mixed media on board, 97 x 68 x 22. Wiesbaden, DE: Museum Wiesbaden.

Another interesting detail relating to Duchamp's *Waterfall* concerns the *Water Mill* that it powered. Though Duchamp did not care to represent the former, "to avoid the trap of being a landscape painter again" (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:276), he paid much attention to the making of *Glider containing a Water Mill in Neighbouring Metals* of 1913-1915. This is the site where Duchamp explores issues of energy and power in the *Glass*. Of course, the *Glider-and-Mill* apparatus recalls wheeled chariots that Homer mentions (Lattimore 1965:9.241), but serves the present argument as a general technological achievement concerning axle construction. The closest equivalent of this invention in the *Odyssey* is the tool that Odysseus was in command of when blinding Polyphemus, "[the companions] seized the beam of olive, sharp at the end and leaned on it / twirled it, like a man with a brace-and-bit who bores into / a ship timber and his men from underneath, grasping / the strap on either side whirl it and it bites resolutely deeper." (ib. 1965:9.382-386). It appears that Homer's simile concerns the bow drill, which is an ancient tool involving a spindle attached with coils to the string of the bow for the purposes of woodworking. Duchamp borrowed the semi-circular shape of the frame for his *Glider containing a Water Mill* from the fully bent bow. He was also evidently inspired by the Rouen-born Jean-Jacques Lequeu's picture *Il est libre* (*He is Free*) of 1798-1799, whose French tripartite title is spelled in the Greek alphabet, which depicts a female nude emerging on her back from an open lunette, while fixing her gaze on the male *Euplectes Progne*, a long-tailed widowbird, that she has just set free. It is worth noting that this bird's tail is a sexual ornament that is detrimental to its survival (Craig 1980). In a carefully staged photograph, Man Ray captured Duchamp closely imitating the woman's recumbent pose with the *Glider containing a Water Mill* on its side before him, ensuring the axis of the latter machine is aligned with his genital area. In this important study for the *Bachelor Apparatus* of the *Glass*, Duchamp created what had been described as "not just an oddly simplified machine, but a paradigm of frustrated, pointless activity" (d'Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:276). Sliding back and forth on its two runners over his genitals, the *Glider-cum-Mill* apparatus evokes onanism. Eva Hesse must have appropriated this idea in her *Eighter from Decatur* of 1965, an absurd construction that seems to playfully represent a similarly titillating gadget – a water mill wheel powered by waterfall. Here, the paddles of the wheel are reduced to the outline of organic tongues that aim to lap the mind to orgasm, while at its centre blooms a fully erect nipple. Of course, such hollow paddles would act in vain to activate the wheel. The waterfall is insinuated with a background relief of concentric semi-circular as waves of energy caused by the prominence of the nipple in their centre. If the stake employed to blind Polyphemus is taken to be a phallic symbol, then the sexual element clearly is a common denominator amongst all these wheel-related works.

Duchamp's *Liqueur Bénédictine* as the *Sirens*

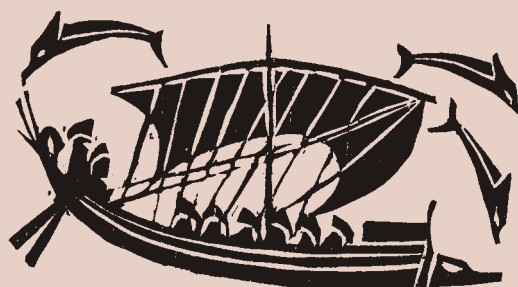
III.8

A central subject mutually shared by Homer's *Odyssey*, Joyce's *Ulysses* and Duchamp's *Glass* is alcohol, which raises questions about its role and significance. Throughout the *Odyssey* Homer poetically referred to the sea as *oinops*, literally 'wine-faced', which Lattimore poetically translated as "wine-blue" (Lattimore 1965:2.421; 5.221; 7.250; and 12.388). Joyce too evoked its risk of intoxication, "The snotgreen sea. The scrotumtightening sea. *Epi oinopa ponton. [...] Thalatta! Thalatta!*" (Joyce 1934:1.7). This reference, associating the sea with wine, seems not so much to do with the sea's appearance, but rather evokes the alluring challenge that it holds for the seaman, which is a life-threatening rite of initiation to inner freedom. Hence the main point of Cavafy's 1911 poem *Ithaca*, which reads, "hope your road is a long one" (Cavafy 1975:36). As a matter of fact, when Odysseus as a beggar embarked on his false story to Eumaeus, he said, "I only wish there were food enough for the time, for us two, / and sweet wine for us here inside the shelter, so that / we could feast quietly while others tended the work; then / easily I could go on for the whole of a year and still not / finish the story of my hearts tribulations" (Lattimore 1965:14.193-197). This excerpt is evidence of linking well-being to creativity.

For the vase painting known as *Dionysus in his Magic Boat*, Exekias used the kylix ware type, a wine-drinking cup that would reveal the picture at its bed as the holder drank all of its content. This picture depicts Dionysus, god of ecstasy, drunkenness and sexuality, in an ancient Greek boat with a wind-filled sail billowing the vessel forward, among dolphins, symbols of the god. The picture's dark red ground appropriately evokes Homer's famous simile of the sea as wine-looking. Surprisingly, a grape vine grows from the ship itself upwards beside the mast, branching over the whole of the top with clusters of grapes. The over life-sized god is treating the ship as a *chaise longue*, reclining in a relaxed manner while holding a horn of plenty likely filled with his favourite drink. In essence the painting is of a drunken ship, a hallucination brought about by Dionysus' own drunkenness. This brings to mind Arthur Rimbaud's 1871 decadent poem *The Drunken Boat*, describing a shipwreck in a fragmented first-person narrative saturated with symbolism – the filling of the boat with water alludes to its getting drunk. If, on the other hand, the *Odyssey* is perceived to be the pure fiction in Odysseus' mind, this too is hinted at when as a beggar he admits to Penelope that one "might find fault with me and say I swam in tears because my brain drowned in liquor" (*ib.* 1965:19.120-121). The fact that Guy Fleming, designer of the cover of Lattimore's classic book, based his woodcut on Exekias' *Dionysus* kylix, rather fortuitously links the *Odyssean* adventures with intoxication.

Wine was well received by everybody in the ancient world. All benevolent male protagonists of the *Odyssey* (namely Athena as Mentor, Alcinous, Demodocus, Nestor, Odysseus and Telemachus) enjoyed it in moderation. However, it led to mischief when abused. The first such instance was when Odysseus' companions had "much wine" (*ib.* 1965:9.45) at Ismarus, which wasted them and caused six men out of each of his ships to be killed by the Cicones. Then, while trapped in the cave of Polyphemus, Odysseus gave him three full bowls of sweet black wine, which got into his brains (*ib.* 1965:19.362), as a means to halt his cannibalism. At Aeaea, Circe transformed Odysseus' companions into pigs by offering them a potion mixed with Pramnian wine (*ib.* 1965:10.235). Once Odysseus managed to make an ally of Circe, "There for all our days until a year was completed / we sat there feasting on unlimited meat and sweet wine" (*ib.* 1965:10.467-468). When Odysseus gave the order to depart from Aeaea at dawn, his young companion Elpenor, who had lain down drunkenly to sleep on the roof of Circe's palace, made a fatal mistake by falling off the edge of that roof (*ib.* 1965:10.555-559). Then, after Odysseus has reached Ithaca he discoursed about the nature of wine as beggar in Eumaeus' hut, "Wine sets even a thoughtful man to singing, / or sets him into softly laughing, sets him to dancing. / Sometimes it tosses out a word that was better unspoken." (*ib.* 1965:14.464-466). The public beggar Irus, who was notorious as an incorrigible glutton and drunkard, despite being younger than the disguised Odysseus, was easily beaten at the boxing contest with him. Finally, arguably under the influence of wine, the suitor Eurymachus came out toward Odysseus with the unfounded insult, "The wine must have your brains" (*ib.* 1965:18.391), the same words that Odysseus made Melantho regret uttering against him earlier (*ib.* 1965:18.331), which this time was followed by additional

Exekias
(Greece, fl. 545-530 BC).
Dionysus in his Magic Boat, c. 530 BC.
Attic black-figure kylix, Ø:31 x 17.
Munich, DE: Staatliche
Antikensammlungen.



Guy Fleming
(USA, 1931-2001).
Odysseus' Boat, 1967.
Woodcut illustration for
the cover of Richard Lattimore's
The Odyssey of Homer (1967).

physical violence. All of the aforementioned instances exemplify the aftermath of transgressive use of wine. Above all of them, however, wine was responsible for the loss of Troy, after the Trojans brought in their city the *Wooden Horse* and were quick to massively drink in celebration of their supposed victory until they were “exhausted from dancing and too drunk to stand let alone fight” (Horace 2014:IV.6). Incidentally, the Homer-obsessed archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann used an Odyssean stratagem – pretending it was his birthday – to invite the guards and his workmen into his hut where his wife kept filling their glasses with his stores’ remaining wine and liqueurs to intoxicate them in order to dig out and hide the so-called ‘Priam’s Treasure’ (*The Graphic*, 20 Jan. 1877:62).

Therefore, the suitors, who are obsessed by wine, took such a transgression to extremes. They were related to wine from the moment the poem introduces them (Lattimore 1965:1.110). They thought of wine so much that they feared Telemachus might put poison in it to destroy them (*ib.* 2.329). Telemachus admitted they “drink the bright wine / recklessly” (*ib.* 1965:2.57-58). This fact was also attested by Eumaeus, who said, “they violently draw the wine and waste it” (*ib.* 1965:14.95). Penelope too said, they “recklessly drink up our

shining / wine; and most of it is used up” (*ib.* 1965:17.536-537). After having revealed himself to his son, Odysseus instructed Telemachus to remove the weaponry from the palace’s great hall and, if the suitors asked why, say to them “with the wine in you, you might stand up / and fight and wound each other and spoil the feast and the courting” (*ib.* 1965:16.292-293). When the *Trial of the Bow* ensued, the leading suitor Antinous commanded, “Take your turns in order from left to right, my companions / all, beginning from the place where the wine is served out.” (*ib.* 1965:21.141-142). This instruction, which pleased all of the suitors, also implied that they were, as ever, under the influence of alcohol. As a matter of fact, Antinous attempted to deter the beggar Odysseus from having a go, by reminding him that “It was wine also that drove the Centaur, famous Eurytion, / distracted in the palace of great-hearted Peirithoös / when he visited the Lapiths.” (*ib.* 1965:21.295-297). Yet, it never crossed his mind that he and the other suitors would actually be the ones to have the unfortunate fate of the drunken Eurytion, whereas the beggar was not only sober, but also skilled and calculative.



“The Physiognomical Effects of a Vicious and Virtuous Life”, in *The Annals of Phrenology and Physiognomy*, New York, NY: Fowler & Wells, 1882.

It is clear, therefore, that in the *Odyssey* intoxication of wine was an abhorrent state opposing virtuousness and heroism. In many respects, the epic theme was the struggle of the virtuous against the vicious. For Homer, virtue related to *kleos* (glory), the fame that heroes win upon accomplishing some great deed, whereas vice identified with the perceived decay of people’s moral and ethical standards that deprived them of *kleos*. However, owing to radical changes in life caused by the Industrial Revolution, such a Homeric ideal no longer held sway. The later part of the 19th century was characterised by an increasing cultural pessimism. Scientists as well as authors and social commentators started questioning whether human progress actually benefited humanity amidst prevailing intertwined signifiers of cultural crisis – anarchism, alcoholism, crime, insanity, declining birth rates, prostitution, sexual perversion, suicide rates and syphilis (Pick 1989:43). The term *fin-de-siècle* did not only refer to the end of the century, but the possibly impending end of European culture and superiority itself (Weir 1995:xvi). Illustrations, like *The Physiognomical Effects of a Vicious and Virtuous Life* of 1882, aimed to impel people to prioritise virtue as if this was a matter of facial features, character expression or casual habits. The term ‘decadence’ gained currency in the 19th century vocabulary and its usage frequently implied moral censure, but also acceptance of the idea. The designation ‘decadent’ was first given by hostile critics of Romanticism to writers of the aesthetic or symbolist movements. Later it was triumphantly adopted by some of the writers themselves, such as Charles Baudelaire, Théophile Gautier and Paul Verlaine, who used the word proudly to represent their rejection of what they considered banal progress (Mangravite 1994:12). In April 1886, Anatole Baju founded *Le Décadent Littéraire et Artistique*, a review in support of the decadent cause – the praise of artifice over

naïveté and sophistication over simplicity, defying pointless Romanticism by embracing subjects and styles that their critics considered morbid and over-refined. Apollinaire's 1913 collection of poems came under the title *Alcools*, which translates literally as 'Spirits' in the alcoholic sense, to boast for himself that he has "drunk the universe" and chanted "songs of universal drunkenness" (Apollinaire 1965:209).

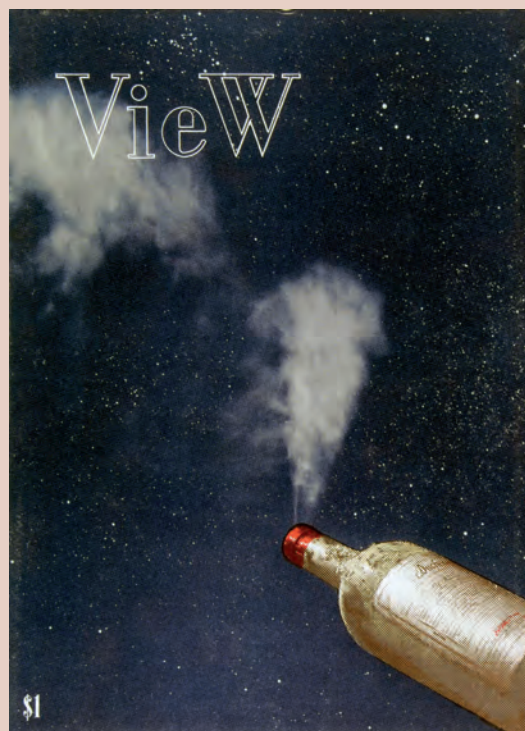
Arguably alcohol appeals to every mature person, but one is cautioned to be responsible. Despite coming from an upper-middle-class family, it seems Duchamp learned *savoir vivre* the hard way. In his 20th year, he created a rather rude illustration for his *Réveillon Menu* (Christmas Eve Menu) in 1907. It featured a pin-up of a longhaired brunette in the nude, enthroned in a gigantic wide and shallow glass so that the excessive champagne that escaped her mouth from the bottle she held close by would be saved. In addition to drinks of all kinds – wines, liquors and champagnes – and delicacies – oysters, appetisers, truffled turkeys, salads and pâtés – the menu included

"plum pudding", intended as a pun on sexual intercourse. The extremely lively party at Duchamp's 73 Rue Caulaincourt studio, Montmartre, went on for two days. It infuriated the neighbours so much that his landlord evicted Duchamp and, according to French law, gave him six months notice to find a new lodging. Instead of renting a new flat in the area, he moved in Neuilly, probably in an attempt to get away from the distractions of Montmartre so that he could concentrate on his work (Tomkins 1996:38).

Devastating though the addiction to alcohol by whatever means is, it has sometimes been a source of inspiration. Baudelaire suggested in his 1856 essay that drinking is for Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) not a vice but a means of literary production (Pichois 1999:315). In a letter in the last year of his life, Poe wrote, "I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been in the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories." (Meyers 2000:89). This brings to mind that it was alcohol that offered Duchamp the unforgettable nightmare he had in Munich in August 1912, which was cited by Robert Lebel as follows, "Upon returning from a beer hall where, so he says, he had drunk too much, to his hotel room where he was finishing the *Bride*, he dreamed that she had become an enormous beetle-like insect which tortured him atrociously with its elytra." (Lebel 1959:73). Though this alcoholic experience did not deter the artist from pursuing his vision, it certainly inspired his vision of the *Bride* and influenced his misogynistic outlook of her. The crucial point is to be in command of alcohol, which means to use it rather than be used by it. Indeed, in the course of his life, Duchamp was not taken over by alcohol, but used it as a pivot of his work, like Homer did in his *Odyssey*. It is worth noting that for the March 1945 issue of the *View* magazine, which was devoted entirely to Duchamp, his design for the cover featured a wine bottle



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Réveillon Menu, 24 Dec. 1907, Paris.
Drypoint on paper, 20 x 12.
Rouen, FR: Musée des Beaux-Arts.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Front cover for *View*, ser. 5, no. 1,
Mar. 1945, New York.
Lithograph on paper, 30 x 46.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art.

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set against a starry night. Ironically, in the place of the bottle's traditional label, he reproduced his military record to date, which was a joke, since he is known to have avoided war at all costs.



Advertisement for Liqueur Bénédictine, in *La Science et la Vie*, June 1913:11.

Duchamp chose to convey his Bachelors' craving for alcohol via the *Liqueur Bénédictine*, a famous herbal liqueur beverage developed in the 19th century and produced in France. Its incredible story is said to begin in 1510 in the Abbey of Fécamp, in Normandy, when the Benedictine monk, Dom Bernardo Vincelli, created a medicinal aromatic herbal beverage that was produced until the abbey's devastation during the French Revolution. In 1863, Alexandre Le Grand, a merchant and collector of religious art, claimed discovering the lost recipe for this secret elixir in his collection. In fact Le Grand invented the recipe himself, helped by a local chemist, and told this story to connect the liqueur with the city history to increase sales. Distilled and aged in a palace, built in Fécamp in tribute to this liqueur, Bénédictine is an alchemy of 27 different plants and spices. Its production used a bottle with an easily recognizable shape and label. The recipe is a closely guarded trade secret, purportedly known to only three people at any given time. To deter imitation of the bottle, label and recipe, the company prosecuted those it felt to be infringing its intellectual property and to this day maintains a Hall of Counterfeits on its

grounds in Fécamp. Doubtless, the *Liqueur Bénédictine* would be one of those cultural products that, according to Roland Barthes, the bourgeoisie used to impose certain values upon the rest of society. Barthes claimed that French red wine in general was portrayed by the bourgeoisie as an indicator of health and a sign of strength, in direct contradiction with the reality of its harmful effects (Barthes 1957:60). Today, the universally acknowledged risk associated with the consumption of alcohol obliges the official www.benedictinedom.com website to advise its clients to "enjoy Bénédictine responsibly".



Charles Shere (USA b. 1935). *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even: Song of the Bottle of Bénédictine*, 1984. Opera. Courtesy of Mafishco, Emeryville, CA.

Though the bottle of the *Liqueur Bénédictine* does not feature as such in the *Glass*, its central position is attested by the namesake opera in three acts that the American composer Charles Shere composed in 1984, designed and directed by Margaret Fisher. Eclectic, though fundamentally within the European-American concert tradition, Shere's music is influenced by the examples of Ives, Webern, early Stockhausen, Thomson and

Cage; but also by procedures of Duchamp, Stein and Joyce. In his imagination Shere thought of the Bride as a violin and the Grinder as a piano. The lower section in general inspired his first piano sonata, *Bachelor Machine*. Fascinated by Duchamp's note "Song: of the revolution of the bottle of Bénéd." (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:61), he composed the *Song of the Bottle of Bénédictine* in scene 4 of act II. Shere pointed two details concerning *Bénédictine* that are significant – first, the bottle itself, whose shape recalls that of an Indian club used for gymnastics; second, the fact that the liqueur is usually imbibed as a digestif after the indulgence of the meal (in an email to the author dated 31 July 2015). Of course, its function in the *Glass* is as motive power in the unpainted mechanism that makes the *Glider* go back and forth, which is itself a metaphor for staggering from intoxication.

The subject of alcoholism, which according to Poe threatens "life and reputation and reason" (Meyers 2000:89), is of central importance in life. Considering the obsessive and widespread presence of the

wine motif in the *Odyssey*, it seems not only natural, but ingenious as well, that the *Sirens* episode should allegorically deal with the crucial addiction to alcoholism. Katherine van Wormer and Diane Rae Davis associated the song of the *Sirens* with the ever-persistent problem of all sorts of addiction (*Addiction Treatment* 2012:59). Professor van Wormer claimed, “The temptation of the *Sirens* leads to irresistible craving and loss of judgment, the anticipatory euphoria that drives one to the activity that is destructive. The *Sirens* are enticing via both sight and sound. Nowadays, psychologists set up casinos with sight and sound to elicit addictive tendencies in people and lure gamblers to spend more money. Homer was very clever in this prophetic way.” (in an email to the author dated 23 October 2015). The goddess Circe forewarned Odysseus about them with the following words, “You will come first of all to the *Sirens*, who are enchanters / of all mankind and whoever comes their way; and that man / who unsuspecting approaches them and listens to the



Herbert Draper
(England 1863-1920).
Odysseus and the Sirens, c. 1909.
Oil on canvas, 177 x 214.
Hull, UK: Ferens Art Gallery.

Sirens / singing, has no prospect of coming home and delighting / his wife and little children as they stand about him in greeting, / but the *Sirens* by the melody of their singing enchant him. / They sit in their meadow, but the beach before it is piled with boneheaps / of men now rotted away and the skins shrivel upon them.” (Lattimore 1965:12.39-46). Then Circe advises him what to do to overcome them, “You must drive straight on past, but melt down sweet wax of honey / and with it stop your companions’ ears, so none can listen; / the rest, that is, but if you yourself are wanting to hear them, / then have them tie you hand and foot on the fast ship, standing / upright against the mast with the ropes’ ends lashed around it, / so that you can have joy in hearing the song of the *Sirens*; but if you supplicate your men and implore them to set you / free, then they must tie you fast with even more lashings.” (ib. 1965:12.47-54). Herbert Draper created the most evocative representation of the *Sirens* episode. He seductively rendered them in such a way as to turn from mermaids to regular women once having climbed out of the sea onto the ship. He chose three of them – a red-haired, a brunette and a blond Siren – to challenge every man’s preference and thus entice them to their destruction. However, because of Circe’s precautions, the whole crew make it safely past.

Inspired by the Homeric *Sirens*, Joyce represented his own as the two flirtatious barmaids pulling beer for their male clients in the bar of the Ormond Hotel late in the afternoon. Richard Hamilton’s *Bronze by Gold* is a close visualisation of Joyce’s text – “On the smooth jutting beerpull laid Lydia hand lightly, plumply, leave it to my hands. All lost in pity for croppy. Fro, to: to, fro: over the polished knob (she knows his eyes, my eyes, her eyes) her thumb and finger passed in pitty: passed, repassed and, gently touching, then slid so smoothly, slowly down, a cool firm white enamel baton protruding through their sliding ring.” (Joyce 1934:11.281). The particular narrative description powerfully conflates alcohol with sexuality. Reflected in the mirror is jaunty Blazes Boylan with yellow straw boater eyeing bronze-haired Miss Douce by blonde-haired Miss Kennedy; Bloom with his back turned to his rival salutes an acquaintance in the dining room. The subdued colours of Hamilton’s plate correspond to the air of melancholy that suffuses this Joycean episode. Joyce’s themes of desire, loss and betrayal are voiced through a complex fugue of song, music and sounds within the Dublin bar. Later, in the *Circe* episode, Stephen admits the symbolic reason of his own drinking, “But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king” (ib. 1934:15.574), with reference to the adage that Ireland is a captive of the double tyrants of the Roman Catholic Church and England’s United Kingdom.



Richard Hamilton
(England, 1922-2011).
Bronze by Gold, 1949/1985-1987.
Etching, aquatint, engraving on paper,
53 x 43. London, UK: Tate Gallery.

Written during the Second World War, the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* set out to blame what the Homeric *Sirens* archetypally stand for – the irresistible promise of carefree pleasure – to explain why the Enlightenment failed and humanity “is sinking into a new kind of barbarism” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944:xiv). Duchamp’s *Liqueur Bénédicte* seems to be a cryptic reference to the same allegory of the *Sirens*’ lethal allure.

III.9

Duchamp's *Chocolate Grinder* as the Lust of Flesh

Normally the journey by sea from Troy to Ithaca in ancient Greece would last no more than three weeks in good sailing weather conditions, across the Aegean Sea, around Cape Malea and up along the Ionian Sea coastline. However, Cassandra had prophesied the doom of all the Greeks' *nostos* (homecoming) largely owing to their war crimes, which had offended even the gods that were in their favour. Odysseus' return home was the lengthiest of all the *nostoi* and is known to have tried his wife's patience to extremes. Of course, Poseidon made his seaward journey difficult because he caused harm to his beloved son Polyphemus. Moreover, Aeolus' benevolent gift, the *Bag of Winds*, served to blow his ship astray even when his island was within sight. However, the longest delay in Odysseus' ten-year wanderings was caused by three distinct types of women that challenged in different ways his lust of flesh. Each feminine type represented an altogether different sexual experience, like stages of a rite of initiation in the natural progression from birth to death, where Odysseus was all alone to pursue his fate.

The first experience was with Circe in the mysterious island of Aea. She was a sea witch who entertained rough men hospitably in her open plan house, with food, music and sex. The paradox of distant travelling is that it increasingly reminds the traveller of *nostos*. But sex is one of the strong ways this can be assuaged, encouraging travellers to forget their homes and project their wife in whores. By waving her magic wand, the witch turned men into grunting swine, the archetypal emblem of men in the thrall of sexual heat. With the *moly* (Lattimore 1965:10.305; after which Joyce fashioned Molly's name), the magical herb Hermes provided for him, Odysseus escaped transformation. Appealing to Circe, he convinced her to restore the form of his companions. In her bed he not only enjoyed the perverse erotica she had to offer, but also learned from her crucial truths – that the dangerous feminine figures he would encounter were but projections of masculine fear of women's sexuality. The implied lesson of Homer's Circe is that men must learn to hate themselves before they can love women. After a year was completed, his companions became impatient and he agreed to depart. The Circe episode of Joyce's *Ulysses* is a nightmarish hallucination of role reversal and sadomasochism. Circe put in an appearance as Bella Cohen, mistress of the local whorehouse, helping Bloom get in touch with his feminine side and satisfying his longing for punishment by turning him first into a woman and then into a pig. Only through ritual humiliation and castration could Bloom emerge on the other side purified and ready to go back to his wife.

On the ideal island of Ogygia, Odysseus, sole survivor of his fleet, came across the beautiful nymph Calypso, the archetype of proud, strong and independent woman. Her name means enfolding, which implies that she had the capacity to offer him a womb-like protection. She was steady in age, but also character – neither passing judgement on him nor seeking to control him. She was his absolute soul mate, but he felt marooned throughout the seven years he spent with her there. During his harmonious cohabitation with her, he had given up the adventurous side of manhood. Calypso offered him eternal youth, divine food, perfect sex and peace of mind. Her dangerous appeal lay in the comfort of timelessness, the oblivion of responsibility, the denial of self and these can be a powerful call if one is weak of character. Odysseus, however, rejected these qualities as being more feminine than he could take. His heart was set on his mortal wife and real home. He craved the kind of friction and challenging obstacles, the experience of conflict and heartbreak, that is reality. It is worth noting that in Joyce's *Ulysses* it was Molly that held Bloom in a kind of entranced servitude, which made him long to be in a place other than the one where he made his home. It was also perhaps under the influence of Joyce that the roles of Penelope and Calypso were performed by the same actress in Mario Camerini's *Ulysses* of 1954 (Silvana Mangano) and Eric de Kuyper's *Pink Ulysses* of 1990 (José Teunissen).

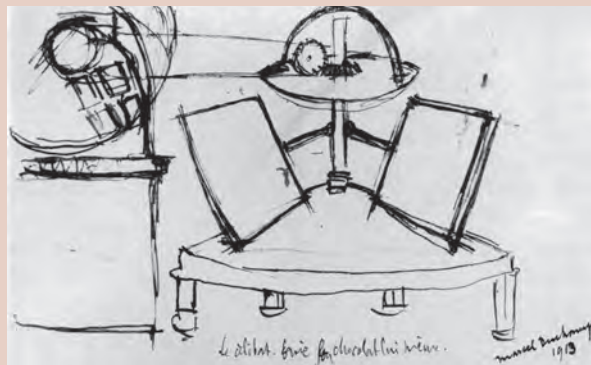
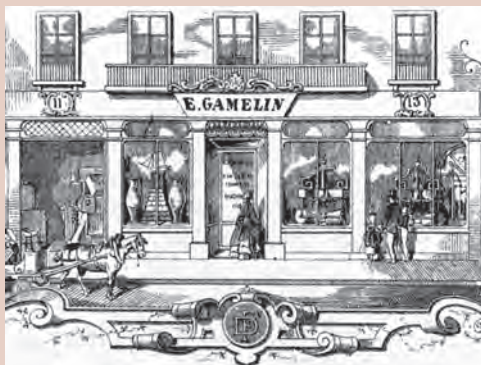
After the tempestuous orgies with Circe and the lonely reveries with Calypso, Odysseus was washed up on the more realistic island of Scheria. Princess Nausicaä was a beautiful young and still unmarried woman. At the same time, she was modern and down-to-earth. She was reconciled with the idea that such a man, as Odysseus, might be called her husband. She had every right to envisage romantic scenes between two lovers who deeply respect one another. Nausicaä appeared as a final temptation that should have appealed to a middle-aged man who sought to be rejuvenated by a younger woman. In Joseph Strick's *Ulysses* (1967) Nausicaä was played by Gerty MacDowell, who performed a sentimental striptease in front of the hero Bloom while he masturbated. His climax was echoed by the fireworks at the nearby bazaar. He was grateful for her helping him feel like a man again. Even so, however, both protagonists of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* prefer to escape being entangled by pure youth and return instead to their long-suffering wives.

The three stories above jointly show how Odysseus dealt with the lust of flesh, from which the suitors cannot be untangled. As opposed to Odysseus, who slipped from temptation based on his firm faith on his valued wife, the suitors are victims of their attraction to Penelope. It seems that this triad of erotic challenges, from which Odysseus escaped, inspired Duchamp to conceive of the three rollers of the *Chocolate Grinder* that processes the Bachelors' desire for the Bride.



Max Bergmann (Germany, 1884-1955). *Max Bergmann's Private Album: The Artist with Friend and Nude Models*, c. 1908. Courtesy of Sammlung Ursula and Klaus-Peter Bergmann, Haimhausen, DE.

In the 1959 BBC interview Duchamp said, “Eroticism is a subject very dear to me... In fact, I thought the only excuse for doing anything was to introduce eroticism into life. Eroticism is close to life, closer than philosophy or anything like it; it’s an animal thing that has many facets and is pleasing to use, as you would use a tube of paint.” (quoted in Schwarz 1969:80). At the age of 23 in Paris of 1910, Duchamp seems to have gone into erotic excesses with Max Bergmann, a painter from Munich three years his senior. They explored Montmartre’s cabarets and exchanged erotic memoirs from their time together, like the *Bilboquet* (see p. 113). They had the chance to explore bohemian nightlife again in Munich in the summer of 1912, when Duchamp spent three months there. Bergmann’s private album contains a double spread of four photographs from 1908, when he was still a student of the Munich Art Academy, which reveal his interest in a kind of female nude photography that stimulates sexuality rather than serves his art. Duchamp would likely be similarly sex-oriented, despite the absence of such erotic photographs in his archives.

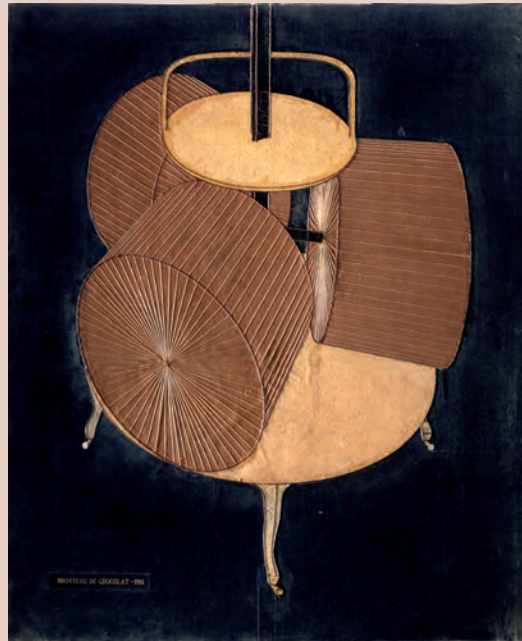


Chocolaterie E. Gamelin, c. 1900. Etching on paper. Rouen, FR: Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen. | Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Le célibat broie son chocolat lui-même*, 1913, Neuilly. Ink on paper, 13 x 21. Greenwich, CT: Private Collection.

So, it was during an annual visit to Rouen early in 1913 that, while walking past E. Gamelin Chocolate Shop, a well-known confectioner on 11-13 Rue Beauvoisine, the aroma of freshly ground chocolate excited Duchamp’s sense of smell. This indelible experience prompted him to pause and study the scene, glimpsing through the shop’s window. An illustrated engraving shows people visiting the shop – a woman about to go through its entrance and a father with his children posing at the shop’s large window, much like Duchamp did, to see one of the two chocolate grinders with three rollers at work. Along with their scent, the sight of these machines inspired Duchamp in 1913 to include the representation of one of them on his *Glass*. His small early sketch of such a grinder shows the mechanism by which the chocolate is produced and echoes a line from a *Green Box* note that suggests onanistic activity, “Principle of [spontaneity] (which explains the gyratory mvt. of the grinder without other help) / The bachelor grinds his chocolate himself—” (Duchamp 1969:210.140). Considering his programme for the *Glass*, it followed that the slow and repetitive circular motion of the rollers, which eventually causes the roasted cocoa beans to turn into liquid, became a camouflaged gesture of his Bachelors’ masturbation.

Duchamp’s decision to relate liquefied cocoa to semen likely had to do with the widespread belief that those who crave chocolate are looking for a sex substitute. This is because chocolate chemically acts in much the same way as sex in that it increases dopamine, releases it into the blood stream and creates feelings of euphoria. Here it is worth noting that in Homer, hand mills are mentioned twice—in the palace of Alcinoüs, where fifty serving

women were occupied with grinding and spinning (Lattimore 1965:7.103-105) and in the home of Odysseus, where twelve mill women were employed (*ib.* 1965:20.107-108). Of course, their mills were used to grind the wheat and the barley flour which, as stuff of life, Homer compares to “men’s marrow” (*ib.* 1965:20.108). For Duchamp at that moment in his early adulthood chocolate/sex was the substance of his innermost being.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Chocolate Grinder, No. 2, 1914, Paris.
Oil and thread on canvas, 65 x 54.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art, Louise and Walter
Arensberg Collection.

Investing in this idea, Duchamp completed his last pure painting, *Chocolate Grinder*, in Neuilly in February-March of 1913. It was an interesting deviation from his preliminary sketch, because of its dissociation from the original base, tank and motor. Instead, it fully exposed the rollers “mounted on a Louis XV nickled chassis” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:68). Subsequently, Duchamp sought an alternative to representing objects in paint. He expressed in a letter to Walter Pach in 1914, “I want something where the eye and the hand count for nothing” (Pach 1938:162). Thus followed *Chocolate Grinder, No. 2* in February 1914 in Paris, a mixed media version. In this he introduced two alternatives to standard painting practice, both designed to eliminate the hand of the artist – the application of paint on canvas through stencils and wound thread on canvas to accentuate the outlines and evoke the physicality of the machine in

2-dimensions. As Duchamp later observed, “The general effect is like an architectural, dry rendering of the chocolate grinding machine purified of all past influences.” (Schwarz 1969:606). This time the chassis’ legs became even more unreliable by being supported each on its own little wheel. He called the shaft rising from the centre of the grinder a *cravate* (necktie) with an eye to fashion, but thinking of it as a phallic symbol. In a manuscript note in the Duchamp Archives, he wrote, “The necktie will owe its elegance to its thickness – ½ cm or 1 cm at the most” (*ib.* 1969:574). With its huge presence, the *Chocolate Grinder* became the centre of attention on the *Glass* as a symbol for the male genitals and hence the counterpart not just of the bridal Sex Cylinder (Golding 1973:65), but of the Bride Apparatus as a whole. Of course, its association to the male genital’s production of sperm was not graphically shown, but was conceptually described only in the notes. Thus, Duchamp avoided the kind of direct offence that caused Joyce’s *Ulysses* to attract controversy, scrutiny and censorship. As a matter of fact, with his *Chocolate Grinder*, Duchamp ingeniously managed to contribute a euphemism for the abject act of masturbation.

Eric de Kuyper
(Belgium, b. 1942).
Pink Ulysses: Masturbation Scene, 1990.
Experimental film, 01:38:00.
Amsterdam, NL: Yuca Film.



Homer’s implied masturbatory experience of Odysseus is plainly manifested in recent years. Eric de Kuyper’s 1990 film *Pink Ulysses*, a gay cult retelling of the *Odyssey*, is a postmodern collage of a number of excerpts – the director’s vintage clips, retro recreations of episodes from the epic, experimental studio scenes and appropriations from classical films. All these excerpts feature as Odyssean characteristics. The whole film emits a particular ‘pink’ mood of lust and melancholy. It begins with the motto, “...wait only for the people who truly love...”, which seems to propose a paradox, since true love is most probably futile. Its gay erotic character is based on the choice of the director to feature narcissistic musclemen in his cast. Typical are his black and white studio shots of a well-built man in a bare state, who is wrapped in white sheets and meanders on what appears to be a large bed. These shots with close-ups of his limbs suggest the eroticisation of the body. The

highlight is a masturbation scene that is plainly shown of another slim young man before a tripartite mirror against a slow movement of Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. This climactic scene seems to suggest

Odysseus' pathogenesis – that he was no exception to the male human species, getting in the frame of mind to lose his seed strictly for pleasure. This act lasts only a brief while. Subsequently, Odysseus goes through all sorts of challenges, about whose virtuality the film is vague. The film's clear postmodern character is ensured by the fact that ultimately Odysseus returns to Ithaca just before the film crew breaks for lunch.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Chocolate Grinder*, 1906/1977. Cast iron and stone, 172 x 165 x 165. Reproduced in Jean Clair's *Marcel Duchamp*, 1977:186. | Jean Tinguely's *The Cyclops* (1969-1994) with Marcel Duchamp's *Chocolate Grinder* (1906/1977) by its entrance. Courtesy of Association Le Cyclop, Milly-la-Forêt, FR.

An interesting fact links Duchamp's *Chocolate Grinder* to the Homeric *Cyclops*. An illustration of the original *Chocolate Grinder* that was used in the posthumous *Marcel Duchamp* retrospective exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, between 31 January and 2 May 1977, was reproduced as object #294 in the "Popular Imagery" section in Jean Clair's *catalogue raisonnée* (Clair 1977:186). The accompanying caption reads as follows, "Grinder (actually mixer) similar, if not identical, to what Duchamp saw operating in the window of the Gamelin Chocolate Factory in downtown Rouen. All these machines only had two rollers. Duchamp added a third roller without tank to obey the 'mystical' number 3 in the *Glass* (3 Stoppages, 3 x 3 Pulls, 3 x 3 Molds, etc.). But also to obey the dialectic of universe in 2, 3 and n dimensions.)" (Clair 1977:186). Soon after the closing of the Duchamp exhibition, that *Chocolate Grinder* was positioned near the entrance of Jean Tinguely's *Cyclops* of 1969-1994 at Milly-la-Forêt. The idea originated in Centre Pompidou's director Pontus Hultén, but by accepting to incorporate this emblematic readymade to his masterwork, Tinguely paid a powerful tribute to his friend, Duchamp (Canal 2007:163).



A. Savy, Jeanjean et Cie (France, f. 1906). *Equipment for Mixing and Sieving Powder*. Sales brochure, 1906.

It must be clarified that this posthumous readymade is actually a Mixer - Blender, produced by the celebrated French manufacturers Alfred Savy, Jeanjean & Cie, who run a Confectioners' Machinery and Manufacturing Company since 1906. The particular machine bears a plaque inscribed in relief, "Société Anonyme des Anciens Etablissements A. Savy, Jeanjean et Cie, Courbevoie-près-Paris". This Mixer - Blender with double rollers in Z configuration was invented by German engineer Hermann Werner originally for the pharmaceutical industry. The mixture is provided by two rotating rollers in opposite directions at different speeds. In 1906, Werner claims to have built more than 11,000 units. The maximum capacity of the cast iron tank is 11,000 litres of up to 50 kg slots (Frogerais 2012:7). The Savy Jeanjean sales brochure describes this machine as follows, "Equipment for mixing and sieving powder / mixer - blender through rollers in granite. With device to increase or decrease at will the pressure of the rollers on the bed" (Goris 1942).

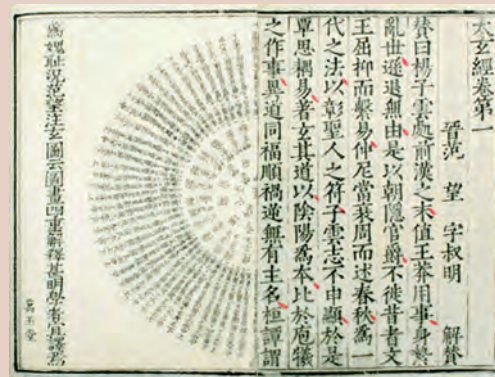
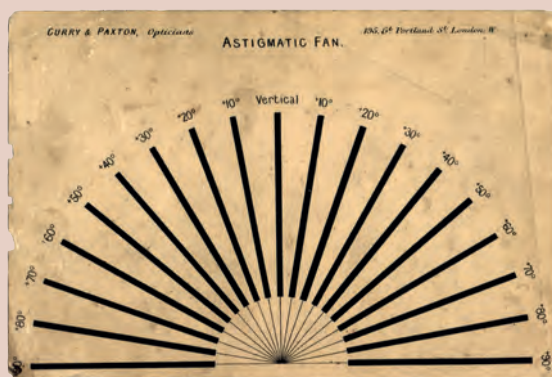
At any event, the presence of Duchamp's *Chocolate Grinder* by Tinguely's *Cyclops* suggests that the subjects of the Bachelors' lust of flesh and Polyphemus' barbarism go hand in hand. At the same time, their treatment as related subjects fortuitously claims a shared Homeric trait for both, which rather strengthens the broader argument that the *Glass* has Homeric roots.

III.10

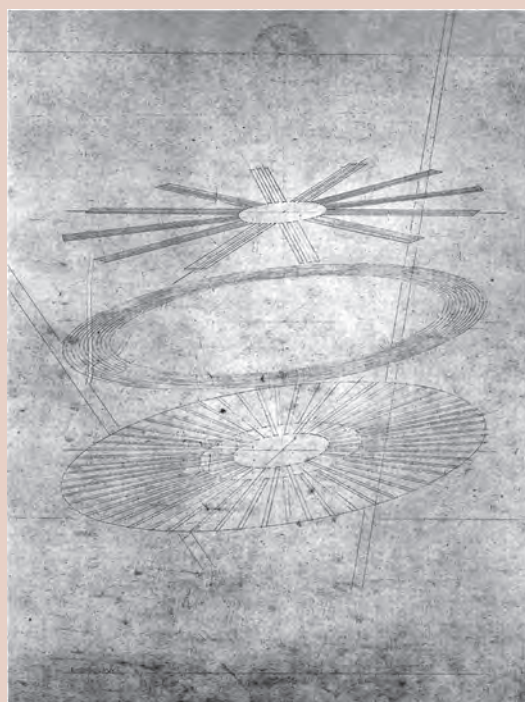
Duchamp's *Oculist Witnesses* as the *Trial of the Bow*

The role and significance of the *Glass*' right section in the lower part cannot be overestimated. There, preside the *Oculist Witnesses* and the *Mandala*, through which the 'malic' desire must pass tried to a line. Though they both form part of the same line, the latter will be dealt with separately (see III.11).

While the *Chocolate Grinder* alludes to male genitals, the liquidation of 'malic' desire through its rollers evokes the creation of sperm. Once the liquidised desire spills from the *Grinder* via the *Toboggan* onto the floor, it splashily bounces upwards like a powerful ejaculation. In order to achieve its aim of winning the *Bride*, the desire targets the dream at the top. In doing so, the desire must head vertically upward, straight through a series of obstacles, of which the *Oculist Witnesses* is the first.



Curry & Paxton (UK). *Snellen type Astigmatic Fan Chart*, c. 1920. Lithograph on paper, 13 x 19. London, UK: The College of Optometrists - British Optical Association Museum. | Yáng Xióng (China, 53BC-18CE). *Tài Xuán Jīng: Divination Chart*, 2BC/1463. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Oculist Witnesses*, 1920, New York. Graphite on reverse of carbon paper, 50 x 38. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

With an interest in science, Duchamp adopted for his *Oculist Witnesses* the design from Herman Snellen's (1834-1908) eye charts to test astigmatism, an optical examination tool developed in the 1860s and still around, out of which the fan chart by Curry & Paxton, exemplified here, developed. In the knowledge that Duchamp called his lens "Mandala", he would have appreciated the pure coincidence of this ophthalmic test's visual resemblance to the divination chart in the *Tai Xuan Jing* (*Canon of Supreme Mystery*), also known in the West as the *I-Ching* or *Book of Changes* of 2BC. According to this ancient Chinese divination system, composed by the Confucian writer Yang Xiong (53BC-18CE), the universe is run by a single principle, the Tao (Great Ultimate), which is itself divided into two opposite principles – *yin* and *yang*.

In a preliminary study, Duchamp represented the *Oculist Witnesses* after three abstract eye-testing chart patterns. Therefore, his design comprises three successive, aligned and varied discs, viewed perspectively and obeying the numerical relationship that is based on number 3 – the bottom disc has 60 radial rays; the middle disc has 6 concentric circles and the top disc has 12 radial groups, each of which is made up of 3 rays. Duchamp actually used a sheet of carbon paper to transfer his design to a silvered section of the glass surface. He then laboriously scraped away the excess silvering around the outlines to form their final perspectival design.

Being based on optical charts, the *Oculist Witnesses* allude to detection and policing over falsity or duplicity. In naming the three charts “Oculist Witnesses”, Duchamp intended to evoke the ritual climax of the kind of traditional wedding ceremony, at which the bride was formally disrobed and put to bed with her new husband in the presence of witnesses. These charts also associate with the eyewitnesses of religious and juridical traditions. In this instance, the beholders are eyewitness to the clinical process of the desire’s passage towards its aim. Once having gone straight through the centre of the three charts, the desire heads for the magnifying lens. This latter element makes the desire scatter in nine separate directions upwards to their target - the Bride’s dream.

Unlike the rest of the *Glass*, these elements – *Oculist Witnesses* and *Mandala* – have a mirroring effect, which stems from the idea that the Bachelors reflect back on themselves onanistically. The metal’s reflective capacity also returns the gaze of the viewers, thus incorporating them in the composition. Golding underlined that “Alfred Jarry, in his experiments with the theatre, had toyed with the idea of a mirror backdrop which would reflect the audience behind player’s backs, thus forcing it to confront itself as part of the reality of the drama it was witnessing” (Golding 1973:69). It is probably this confrontational quality that Duchamp sought to evoke by using mirror-silvering in this section of the *Glass*. The viewers receive their own reflection as fragmented by the three variant patterns of the charts.

More importantly, however, the composition is dominated by an absolute vertical axis, springing from the centre of the three *Oculist Witnesses*, culminating on its top at the *Mandala*, the circle emblematic of a lens. Such a perfect alignment of similar elements closely recalls the *Odyssey’s* Trial of the Bow that Homer recounts in Book 21. To put an end to the lording of the suitors, goddess Athena inspired Penelope to propose the legendary *Trial of the Bow* that would make her marry the person who shall first meet the challenge. Here is how Penelope introduced the game, “the one who takes the bow in his hands, strings it with the greatest / ease and sends an arrow clean through all the twelve axes, / shall be the one I go away with” (Lattimore 1965:21.75-78). Homer chose Telemachus to hype the prize, “a woman; there is none like her in all the Achaean country, / neither in sacred Pylos nor Argos nor Mycenae, / nor here in Ithaca itself, nor on the dark mainland.” (*ib.* 1965:21.107-109). He made it sound as if it concerns a slave market, but was inspired to stage a play whose outcome is prescribed. So, Telemachus took it upon himself, “He began by setting up the axes, digging / one long trench for them all and drawing it true to a chalkline, / and stamped down the earth around them” (*ib.* 1965:21.120-122). Though the logic shared amongst all suitors was that each must try to win Penelope, showering her with gifts, significantly, it is she, Penelope, who sets the rules of the game. Rather than marrying the one who could make most offers, she proposes to marry the one who would win this game of Athena’s devising and on her own terms. This *Trial of the Bow* differs from other trials in that it is a challenge as much for the body as for the mind. The conceptual aspect of the game is attested by the suitor Antinous in his reproach to Odysseus for asking to try performing the task – “Ah, wretched stranger, you have no sense, not even a little” (*ib.* 1965:21.288). All suitors, of course, though younger and perhaps mightier men than Odysseus, fail at the first stage of bending the bow, doubtless owing to their drunken state. They fall short of Odysseus’ sobriety, strength and the skill which the bow requires. However, it is Odysseus, ironically in disguise as an old beggar in his own home, who is to be restored as the rightful King of Ithaca. Though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus arrange for the weaponry to be delivered to his hands. Therefore, Odysseus comes forth to try his strength and skills at the game. With virtuoso ease he fastens the string to the mighty bow, effortlessly draws the winged arrow aiming straight and true and lets fly, never missing a ring from first through to last. The woodcut in Simon Schaidenreißer’s *Odyssee (Odyssey)* of 1538 illustrates the whole of Book 21 in the form of synchronic narrative.



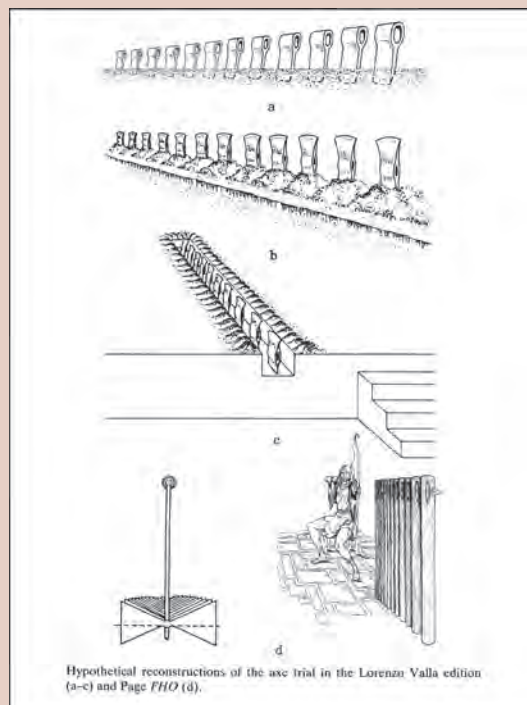
Simon Schaidenreißer
(Bavarian Germany, 1497-1592).
*Odyssee: Argumentum des
XXI Buch*, 1538.
Woodcut on paper, 11 x 15.
London, UK: The British Library.



Francesco Primaticcio
(Italy, 1504-1570).
Odysseus at Ithaca:
The Trial of the Bow, c. 1550.
Oil on canvas, 148 x 205.
Fontainebleau, FR: Château
de Fontainebleau.

bowstring, / and it gave him back an excellent sound like the voice of a swallow. / A great sorrow fell now upon the suitors and all their colour / was changed and Zeus showing forth his portents thundered mightily. / Hearing this, long-suffering great Odysseus was happy / that the son of devious devising Cronus had sent him a portent. / He chose out a swift arrow that lay beside him uncovered / on the table, but the others were still stored up inside the hollow / quiver and presently the Achaeans must learn their nature. / Taking the string and the head grooves he drew the middle grip and from the very chair where he sat, bending the bow / before him, let the arrow fly, nor missed any axes / from the first handle on, but the bronze-weighted arrow passed through / all and out the other end.” (ib. 1965:21.393-423). Francesco Primaticcio captured this moment of perfect order in a fresco of Château de Fontainebleau’s Galerie d’Ulysse, whose destroyed original survives through a copy. At the same instant Zeus thundered from heaven. Odysseus accepted the omen and gave sign to Telemachus to begin the *mnesterophonía* (slaughter of the suitors). Odysseus then loaded his bow again turning it, this time, on the suitors and killing them one by one without pity. This scene of great violence was best captured in Moreau’s monumental painting - *The Suitors* of 1852-1898 (see p. 50).

Here is how Homer described the crucial scene – “Odysseus [...] was handling the bow, turning it / all up and down and testing it from one side and another / to see if worms had eaten the horn in the master’s absence. / And thus would one of them say as he looked across at the next man: / ‘This man is an admirer of bows, or one who steals them. / Now either he has such things lying back away in his own house, / or else he is studying to make on, the way he turns it / this way and that, our vagabond who is versed in villainies.’ / And thus would speak another one of these arrogant young men: / ‘How I wish his share of good fortune were of the same measure / as is the degree of his power ever to get this bow strung.’ / So the suitors talked, but now resourceful Odysseus, / once he had taken up the great bow and looked it all over, / as when a man, who well understands the lyre and singing, / easily, holding it on either side, pulls the strongly twisted / cord of sheep’s gut, so as to slip it over a new peg, / so, without any strain, Odysseus strung the great bow. / Then plucking it in his right hand he tested the



**Hypothetical Reconstruction of the
Axe Trial - Lorenzo Valla (a-c) and
Page (d). Peter Jones,
Homer’s Odyssey, 1998:185.**

The issue of how the axes were set up and where the arrow had to go through, is of considerable value to appreciate how the *Trial of the Bow* was represented in art. In their attempt to represent the scene faithfully with all twelve axes in a line, scholars have basically proposed two solutions. Lorenzo Valla suggested that the metal blades were on their own, rid of the handle and offered three possible ways by which they were planted into the ground so that the arrow would pass through their handles’ hole (Valla 1981-1986). Denys L. Page suggested that the axes were complete with handle and planted upturned so that the arrow would pass through the rings on their handles’ end (Page 1973). Another issue emerges with their material. Obviously, translators of the past sought to bring their version close to the presumed literary tastes of contemporary readers. This explains why brass and silver were preferred over bronze and iron in modern times. Nevertheless, in Mycenaean times

iron particularly was more highly prized a metal than silver. After having been introduced around 1900 BC, at the height of the Bronze Age, it was around 1200 BC – the alleged period of the Trojan War – that ironworkers succeeded in making hard-wrought iron with properties similar to those of modern steel. In its early stages, iron was used as an element to denote social differences, solely as a status symbol and only available as such to the upper classes. However, once the secret of hardening it, by cooling after subjecting it to extreme temperatures, was known, iron became a material of great strategic importance, ideally suited for military purposes. Though offering a much broader range of practical and creative possibilities,

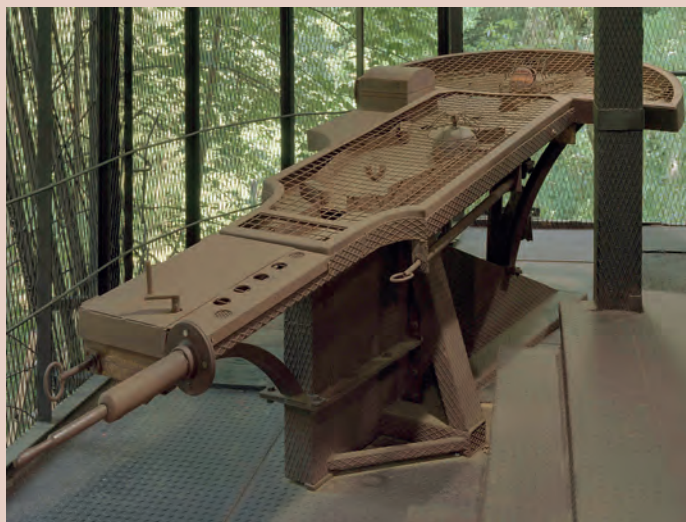
this metal was particularly difficult to smelt. With their skill in metallurgical procedures, the Greeks were soon to make masterpieces of iron, which explains Homer's emphasis on this metal. These axes were valued as a treasure in themselves, so that Antinous said, "but we shall leave all the axes standing / where they are. I do not believe anyone will come in / and steal them away from the halls of Odysseus" (Lattimore 1965:21.260-262).



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). Cover of *Minotaure*, 12.1934, Paris. Antwerp, BE: Ronny van de Velde. | Anonymous (France, c. 20th). *Yeux Zinzolins* c. 1934. Photomontage after André Breton's poem *L'air de l'eau* (1934).

The accurate verticality of the *Oculist Witnesses* brings to mind Duchamp's later note concerning the particular lighting of *Étant donnés*, "spotlight 150 w. G[eneral].E[lectric]. (which) must fall vertically, exactly, on the cunt" (Duchamp 1987:20). There, lighting is treated as a phallic arrow aiming at a vaginal target. The relation of the *Glass* to the bow-and-arrow was revealed in the 6th number of the surrealist magazine *Minotaure*, in 1934. This issue featured the first major article on the *Glass*, written by André Breton. Actually not having seen the *Glass* itself, Breton concluded that it is "among the most significant works of the 20th century" (Lebel 1959:94). On the cover, Duchamp reproduced his fresh *Rotorelief Corolles* over Man Ray's photograph *Dust Breeding* of 1920. This particular rotorelief represents in two dimensions three pristine concentric spheres, with black skin and red interior, straightly pierced through their centre and viewed at an angle against dust. Besides, a photomontage after Breton's 1934 poem *L'air de l'eau* (*The Air of Water*) presented a modern Amazon seductively posing with her long bow by the target. 5 arrows already shot have missed the target's centre. A collage of phrases originating in the poem crosses strategic positions of her body – "Yeux zinzolins" (zinzolin eyes) in the place of her head; "J'eus le temps de poser mes lèvres [Sur tes cuisses de verre]" (I had time to place my lips [On your thighs of glass]) springing from her waist and "Toi" (Thee) at her feet. Significantly, *zinzolin* is a trisyllable word meaning a reddish-violet colour of chromatic volatility that creates emerald hues. Hence, this exotic term was used to describe the fickle nature of woman that evades being pinned down. The longest of collaged phrases serves as an arrow showing the way to hit bullseye, past the grip of the bow before the woman's pubic area. This Amazon, then, seems to be the *Glass' Bride* as Breton described her, "the trophy of a fabulous hunt through virgin territory, at the frontiers of eroticism, of philosophical speculation, of the spirit of the sporting competition, of the most recent data of science, of lyricism and of humour." (Lebel 1959:90). This description recalls Telemachus' own advertisement of his mother as prize of the *Trial of the Bow*, cited above.

Jean Tinguely
 (Switzerland, 1925-1991) and
Bernhard Luginbühl
 (Switzerland, 1929-2011).
The Cyclops: Tellflipper, 1973.
 Steel, 132 x 480 x 200.
 Courtesy of Association Le Cyclop,
 Milly-la-Forêt, FR.



zantine. The *Tellflipper* refers to William Tell, but in this study's context may well be seen as a descendant of the classic bow. It is a giant pinball machine that has the form of a crossbow with such powerful springs that it takes two strong adults to operate its pistons. During the game, a central clock chimes when the steel balls hit it, while a light is activated rewardingly if the score is any good.

S. Teddy D.
 (Indonesia, b. 1970).
Phallus Tank – 1917-2011, 2011.
 Painted resin, each: 105 x 72 x 140.
 Paris, FR: Galerie Wallworks.



at an unexpected result. Duchamp's idea is echoed on S. Teddy D.'s *Phallus Tank* series of 2011. Each tank is dated from 1917 to 2011, with reference to the great wars of the 20th century, where the tanks featured. Their monochromatic palette in red hue varies successively from dark to light depending on the supposed length of time it took the blood to dry from the moment the colour was freshly poured. The relation of the ejaculation to shooting is also evidenced in Joyce's *Ulysses*. In his waking dream scene, Bloom fantasises about Boylan having sex with his wife in Bella Cohen's brothel and him peeping through the keyhole while he masturbates to their lovemaking. As he watches, he even cheers them on, "(His eyes wildly dilated, clasps himself) Show! Hide! Show! Plough her! More! Shoot!" (Joyce 1934:15.553).

If the parallelism of *Bride to Penelope* and *Bachelors to Suitors* seems merely coincidental – which, was it on its own, one would be prone to reject – the relevance of the *Oculist Witnesses* to the rings used in the *Trial of the Bow* makes the reference convincing, if not unmistakable. Duchamp has once again used 3 as his favourite number. The shared numeric relation to number 3 of the twelve axes and the design of the three *Oculist Witnesses* is evident. The correspondence of metal is further evocative of their relation. The gleaming texture of the hard-wrought iron of the axes is interpreted by Duchamp in silver for its highly reflective quality. The three oculist charts, placed with geometrical precision one right under the other at equal geometrical intervals, are evocative of the twelve axe rings trued at regular distance to a perfect line. The nature of the *Oculist Witnesses*, originating from ophthalmological manuals and relating to the physical activity of 'witnessing', suggests the express priority of sight at its finest for the purposes of this physico-intellectual challenge. Finally, the agenda of the *Oculist Witnesses*, meant for the desire to pass straight through the very centre of each chart, is evocative of the course the arrow should take in order to achieve the desired result. At the same time, transformed into ammunition that cause bullet holes, Duchampian desires

The appeal of archery continued after Duchamp's passing by peers in his tread. Jean Tinguely and Bernhard Luginbühl created the *Tellflipper* in 1973, which featured in the *Crocrodrome* group exhibition at the Georges Pompidou Centre between 1 June 1977 and 2 January 1978 (following the posthumous *Duchamp* retrospective exhibition there) and subsequently was placed in an aviary on the rear of *The Cyclops*' first level mezzanine.

The orderly challenge of precisely shooting the arrow of desire through the *Oculist Witnesses*, suitably complements Duchamp's subsequent chaotic task to employ chance by using a toy cannon to launch painted matches on the nebulous target in the *Bride's Domain*. This toy canon is certainly a device of imprecision, just like the aim of the ejaculating phallus. The artist used it as a device by which to trigger chance and arrive

are likened to the Odyssean deadly arrows that aimed to kill enemies. The parallelism between Duchamp's *Oculist Witnesses* and Homer's *Trial of the Bow* is in every respect successful. Knowledge of classical tradition is as comparable a solution to the enigma of the *Glass* as demotic Greek was useful in solving the riddle of the hieroglyphs in the *Rosetta Stone*.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Successive Drawing*, 1943, New York. Drawing. Original lost, dimensions not recorded. Reproduced in *VVV: Almanac for 1943* (1943:68). Jerusalem, IL: The Israel Museum - Arturo Schwarz Dada and Surrealist Library. | The bird-headed man with a wounded bison in the cave of Lascaux, France, c. 13,500 BC.

The fascination of the avant-garde with romantic pastimes, such as archery, may be explained as appropriation (see I.6). In 1942-1943, a number of surrealist artists arrived in New York to take refuge from the Second World War and David Hare, editor of the surrealist magazine *VVV*, called upon a group of them to contribute to a special issue of almanac for 1943. In *Successive Drawing*, the six participants – Max Ernst, André Breton, Kurt Seligmann, Roberto Matta, Marcel Duchamp and Sonia Sekula – were successively given a five-second glimpse of his or her predecessor's drawing and then told to reproduce it. Duchamp, being the fifth of the six, developed the idea of a bird-headed hunter holding bow and arrow, with a greater emphasis than all the others on the target-like eye in the centre of the head, evocative of the mind. Executed with prehistoric feel, this sketch resembles the enigmatic bird-headed man of around 13,500 BC in the pit of the Lascaux cave in the Dordogne, France. After the cave paintings' chance discovery on 12 September 1940, news spread throughout France, Europe and the world, making Lascaux known as 'The Sistine Chapel of Prehistory'. It is reported that after visiting these finds at Lascaux, Picasso exclaimed, "We have invented nothing new" (Bahn 2005:217). Duchamp's *Successive Drawing* certainly reveals it is affected by it in a sophisticated manner.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (France, 1780-1867). *Odysseus*, 1827. Oil on canvas, mounted on wood, 25 x 19. Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art. | Nancy Etheredge (USA). *Profile of Odysseus for Lattimore's The Odyssey of Homer* (1965). Courtesy of Harper & Row, New York, NY. | Cephisodotus the Elder (fl. 400-360). Detail of *Athena Parthenos*, c. 340 BC. Bronze, H:235. Piraeus, GR: National Archaeological Museum.

At the same time, however, Duchamp's bird-headed man is probably his most evocative representation of Odysseus as a *protégé* of goddess Athena. The head's long beak resembles the rim the classical helmet forms on the head when tilted back, as neoclassical artists, like Ingres, represented Odysseus. Its beaklike feature underlines the accurate horizontality of the hero's unerring aim. Nonetheless, Odysseus' earliest

known headgear was the *pileus* (see II.8). The classical helmet is typical of Athena's attire and the version on Cephisodotus *Statue of Athena Parthenos* is decorated with an owl on either cheek piece. As such, Athena's helmet endows Odysseus with her unique combination of qualities – wisdom, militariness and crafty intelligence. Therefore, the birdlike features of Duchamp's drawing would be akin to those of Athena's sacred bird, the owl. Able to hunt only in darkness and equipped with a sharp beak and powerful talons, the owl is quite a unique bird of prey. Its strategy, depending on instinct, stealth and surprise is, via Athena, conveyed to Odysseus.



Niki de Saint Phalle
(France, 1930-2002).
Still with Princess Camélia and
L'Homme-Oiseau from
Un rêve plus long que la nuit, 1976.
Film, 1:35:00.
Santee, CA: Niki Charitable
Art Foundation.

The bird-headed man that Duchamp sketched may be seen in the flesh with prosthetic wings in Niki de Saint Phalle's 1976 adult fairy-tale *A Dream Longer Than the Night*, shot on the grounds of Jean Tinguely's *The Cyclops*, in the forest of Fontainebleau. The central character was Princess Camélia (Laura Duke Condominas, Niki's daughter), who always had the beautiful and kind Bird Man (Imbert Balsan) in her heart, but the Black Witch (Marina Karella) never gave her the chance to consummate her relation to him. The latter was an Odyssean character, who loved her, but did not have the chance to be close enough to protect her. One night, chancing upon her for the last time, he said, "Camélia, once upon a time there was a little girl who met a big green Dragon, then a Witch took her to see the kingdom of adults. She hoped that she would find a treasure there, but she didn't find it. Camélia, you won't find it by them. Come! Let's look for it together. Fly with me. I am your bird. I am your bird. Come, Camélia!" At the intervention of the Black Man (Laurent Condominas, Niki's son-in-law), Camélia's beloved Bird Man lost his life in the war on her behalf between the Pink and Black Generals. Consequently, Camélia's shattered dream is like the *Glass*, yet another instance of the problematic of unfulfilled erotic desire.

Duchamp's *Mandala as Tiresias*

III.11

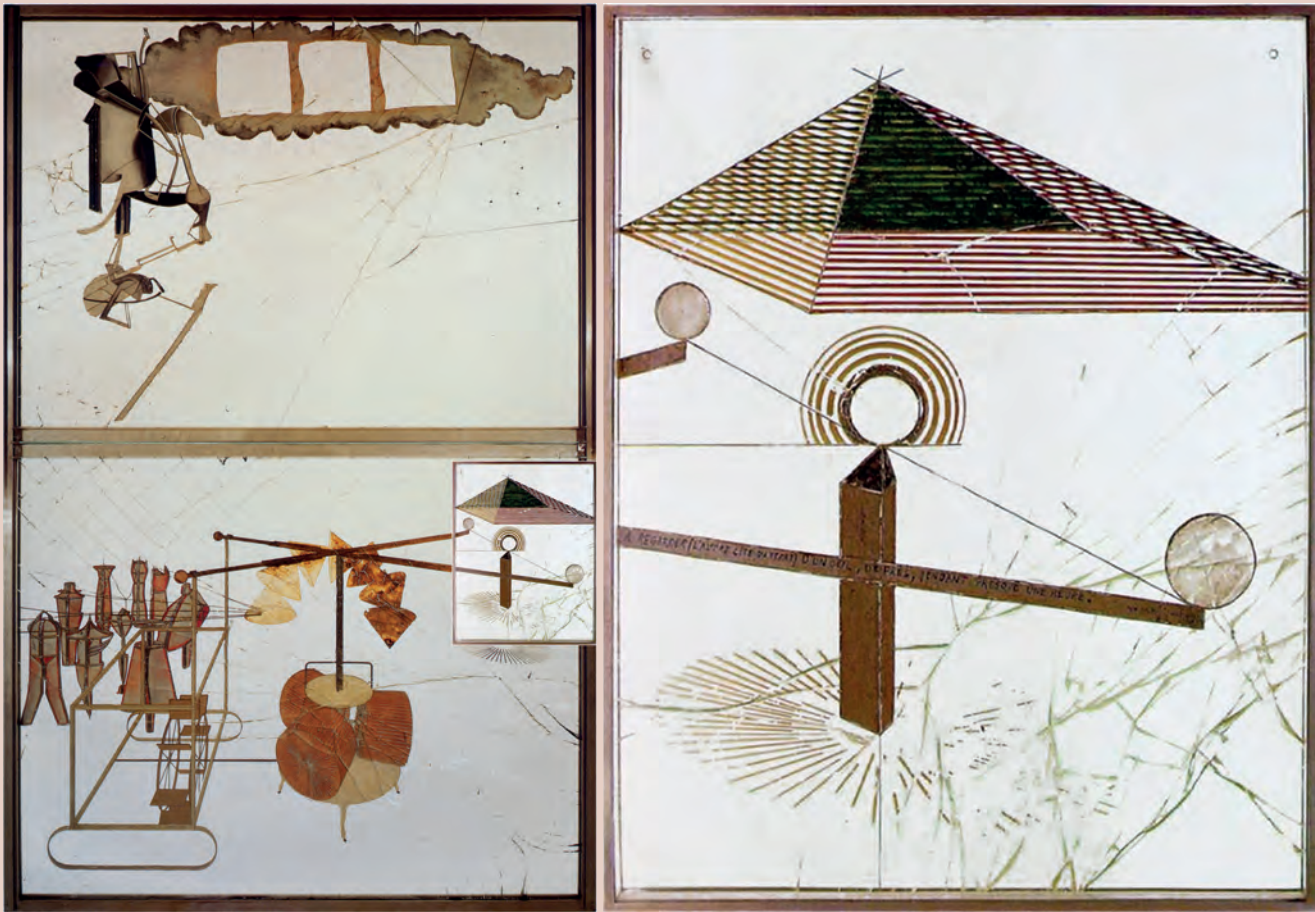
After spending a year with Circe on the island of Aeaea, Odysseus asked that she keep her promise to see him on his way home. Wishing to help him, she responded, “first there is another journey you must accomplish / and reach the house of Hades and of revered Persephone, / there to consult with the soul of Tiresias the Theban, / the blind prophet, whose senses stay unshaken within him, / to whom alone Persephone has granted intelligence / even after death, but the rest of them are flittering shadows.” (Lattimore 1965:10.490-495). By advising Odysseus to visit Hades, Circe revealed the means to accomplish his *nostos* (homecoming). Apparently, this too is but another stage in Odysseus' initiatory journey.

The prodigious painter Henry Fuseli, whose works rose above the stagnant classicism of his day, had been fascinated by Homer's *Odyssey* since the 1760s. Based on a preliminary painting of the 1780s, he created *Tiresias foretells the Future to Odysseus* around 1800. This work depicts the scene of the *nekylia* (necromancy) in the *Odyssey's* Book 11, where Odysseus summons Tiresias' soul for the purpose of divination, to foretell his future events and offer him hidden knowledge. The whirling figures in the background are souls. Prominent amongst them is the soul of his own mother Anticleia who, waiting her turn after the *nekylia*, has her eyes fixed on her son. In the foreground, towers the soul of Tiresias, holding in his hand the *kerykeion*, a sacred staff of gold shaped like a shepherd's crook. At the right appears Odysseus as warrior, holding a sword in hand, the blade of which is stained by the blood of the all-black ram that he was required to sacrifice in order to question Tiresias. After Tiresias drank of the spilled blood he disclosed to Odysseus that his *nostos* will be hard, “you might come back, after much suffering, / if you contain your own desire and contain you companions' [desire]” (Lattimore 1965:11.104-105). He also prophesied that, even if he clears the mess at home, he will go on further distant journeys and that death will come to him at an old age from the sea (Lattimore 1965:11.118-136). Most important, however, in Fuseli's painting is that Tiresias' left hand index and Odysseus' sharp sword point to the same direction – the hero's genitals, as if to blame his emphasis on eroticism and the requirement of its castration. A prerequisite for Odysseus to accomplish his aim is to master his own passion of lust and rise above it. This was by no means an easy task because all of his companions proved to fall victim to their desires. It was up to Odysseus to prevail.



Henry Fuseli
(Switzerland, 1741-1825).
Tiresias foretells the Future to Odysseus, c. 1800.
Oil on canvas, 91 x 78.
Wales, UK: National Museum Cardiff.

Tiresias was a catalyst for Odysseus' *nostos*, essentially an emblem of self-awareness. The oracle that the legendary prophet offered to Odysseus was simple yet crucial. It is the sort of guidance for seafarers, essential advice that may orientate a sailor navigating at sea in the dark. It cannot be overestimated that such a luminous oracle was offered by a blind seer, who did not need and had no use for physical vision. According to the story Callimachus (310-240 BC) told in the poem *The Bath of Pallas* (McKay 1962:56-130), Tiresias was blinded by Athena after accidentally stumbling onto her bathing naked. Despite becoming visually impaired, he was endowed with the gift to see the truth. He had clairvoyance, a special sight with which to perceive things or events in the future or beyond normal sensory contact. The blind Tiresias in Hades offers Homer the unique opportunity to address his disregard for the mundane physical vision and his high esteem of the inner eye, which is the mind. This is exactly what Joyce emphasised when he wrote, “Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes.” (Joyce 1934:3.38). This is the high point where Homer and Tiresias, two legendary visually impaired men, intersect to the point of identification. In the case of Duchamp, it appears that the role of Tiresias was performed by Picabia, who “had an amazing spirit [...] had an entry in a world I knew nothing of [...] opened up new horizons for me” (Cabanne 1971:32). Delivering *The Creative Act* speech at the Convention of the American Federation of Arts in Houston, Texas, in April 1957, Duchamp described artistic creation as a process in which the work moves between the two poles of the artist and the spectator. Therein, Duchamp defined the artist as a “mediumistic being” (Lebel 1959:77), or an individual whose intuition permits him to recognise and expose qualities in common objects that go unnoticed by the average spectator. Not only does this concept endow the artist with the privilege to condition the relationship between spectacle and spectator, but it raises the gifted artist to the level of



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *To Be Looked at* (1918) on the *Glass* (1915-1923). Digital collage. | Marcel Duchamp (*ib.*). *To Be Looked at (from the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour*, 1918, Buenos Aires. Mixed media: oil, lead wire, mirror silvering, paper and magnifying lens on glass, 51 x 41 x 4. New York, NY: The Museum of Modern Art.

a seer compatible with Tiresias' legendary capacity to reveal truths.



Francis Picabia (France, 1879-1953). *Optophone I*, 1921-1922. Ink, watercolour and graphite on paper, 72 x 60. Paris, FR: Private Collection.

During his stay in Buenos Aires from August 1918 to June 1919, Duchamp created *To Be Looked at (from the Other Side of the Glass) with One Eye, Close to, for Almost an Hour*. It is a small glass study for the right-hand section of the lower half of the *Glass* proper. Being preoccupied with the area of the *Oculist Witnesses*, the composition is dominated by a vertical axis, springing from the centre of an oculist chart at the base, through an upright *portillon*, a stylus-like perspectival instrument, with a lens on its top and capitulating on the apex of an optical pyramid. Duchamp may have been inspired from Raymond Roussel's poem *The View* (Alphonse Lemerre, 1904). Its opening lines read, "Sometimes a momentary reflection shines / In the view set into the penholder's tip / Against which my wide-open eye is glued / At a tiny distance, barely held away; / The view is fixed inside a ball of glass" (Roussel 1991:229). Roussel's poem opens up an endless panorama from the tiniest of views, the microscopic vision of the eye focusing in an almost imperceptible photograph within the minute lens of a souvenir pen, which gives rise to questions about proximity, scale and the organisation of perspective. Here, however, the further point of Duchamp's optical experiment seems to be energy. This is evidenced by the striped patterns surrounding the lens and forming the pyramid, which evokes the visualisation of electromagnetic waves. In particular the pattern around the lens refers to the interference effects known as *Newton's Rings*. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1717) was the first to observe in 1717 a pattern of alternating light and dark circles diminishing outwards, caused by interference of light waves, when a convex lens is placed, curved side down, on top of a flat glass. As exemplified in Picabia's *Optophone I* of 1922, a full-length and partially-painted reclining nude against a target-like background of concentric black and white circles, Duchamp used these waves as signs of sexual charge. Here, the lens seems to be affected by its relation to a couple of circles of cut and painted paper as lens substitutes (the *Diagram* of 1973 defines them as 'Marbles') positioned on the tip of the *Scissors*' blades, which are constantly in motion. Normally, inverting whatever is viewed through it, the lens directs all the energy up towards the apex of the pyramidal optical construction. Incidentally, the pyramidal structure evokes the building that King Priam built on Troy's citadel to imprison his

daughter Cassandra to avoid the scandal of her extreme prophetic utterances (Graves 1955:626). Here, however, reference is made to Euclid's basic principle, that our field of vision is a pyramid whose apex is the viewer's eye (Burton 1945:357). By looking cross-eyed through the lens one "becomes an Oculist Witness. And what does he look at? The floating pyramid is the viewer's visual field and this visual field is the path toward the elusive object that is the Bride" (Paz 1978:145). Henderson suggests that Duchamp thought of the title's instruction as a humorous punishment to the retina that is looking in the aesthetic sense of the word. In the late 1960s, however, Duchamp commuted the sentence, saying to Siegel, "I just tell them not to do it because there's nothing to look at but exhaustion." (Siegel 1968:21). The glass of *To Be Looked at* was cracked in transit from Buenos Aires to New York, anticipating the breakage of the *Glass* proper by nearly a decade. Such a cracking, which was supposedly unintentional, seems to emblemise the broken relationship between reality and representation.

Where Duchamp originally intended to glue a Kodak magnifying lens (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:83) in the area above the *Oculist Witnesses* of the large *Glass*, he eventually named it *Mandala* and delineated it by a plain outline of a circle made of mirror silvering. Gabrielle Buffet characterised as "circle obsession" the recurrence of circular forms in Duchamp's graphic work of that period (Lebel 1959:75). It is quite possible that Duchamp was first acquainted with the *mandala* through Apollinaire, who was a friend of Dr Jean Vinchon (1884-1964), a pioneer of art therapy at Hôpital Psychiatrique Sainte-Anne, Paris. Lebel compared a figure in Dr Vinchon's study of the *mandala* to Duchamp's *Coffee Mill* of 1911 (Lebel 1959:74). Dr Vinchon saw the *mandala* as common to Tibetan mystics and neurotic patients. It was later that the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) wrote about it as representing "everything that belongs to the self – the paired opposites that make up the total personality" (Jung 1950:357). The *mandala* (Sanskrit for 'sacred circle') is a spiritual and ritual symbol in Tibetan Buddhism, representing the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically; a microcosm of the universe (Brauen 1997). It is a metaphysical circle encompassing wholeness, standing for life itself – a cosmic diagram that reminds man of his relation to the infinite, the world that extends both beyond and within body and mind. Therefore, the passing of the truly aligned desire through the *mandala* would undergo purification, enlightenment and transubstantiation. As such the *mandala* evokes the metaphysical role of the oracle that Tiresias offered to Odysseus in Hades, which redemptively served his *nostos*.

With a sure interest in the *mandala*, Duchamp must have had an epiphany when, in 1914 at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, he was reading about "new glasses" in Jean-François Nicéron's *La perspective curieuse (The Curious Perspective)* of 1638. In a key passage of the introduction to Book IV on Dioptrics (refraction through lenses), Nicéron stated that, although the invention of the microscope and telescope had marked the greatest triumph of dioptrics, he would focus on more playful and less practical utilities. He then mentioned Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), first in a list of scientists who "thanks to God and this great invention [have revealed] new planets around Jupiter [...] and have recognised that Venus, as well as the moon, has phases that I have seen several times myself in broad daylight by means of these wonderful new glasses" (Nicéron 1638:101). The mention of these "new glasses" must have excited Duchamp and impelled him to conflate the *mandala* to the magnifying lens used in the *telescope* (Greek for far-seeing).

Nicéron's praise of Galileo was justified but daring as well. Italian mathematician, philosopher and astronomer, Galileo was appointed court mathematician to the Medici dukes of Tuscany at Florence. He may not have been the inventor of the telescope, but in 1609 was the first to use it to study the sky and enhanced its power to see what was hitherto unseen. In Venice, in March 1610, he published the *Sidereus Nuncius (Starry Messenger)*, a short astronomical treatise that contains the results of his early observations of the mountainous lunar surface, the stars and planets that were possible to see thanks to the telescope (which he called *perspicillum*). This thin volume would help shift the world away from a theocratic conception of heaven and start the revolution called modern science. Of course, his championship of the Copernican heliocentric planetary system, as opposed to the prevailing Aristotelian geocentric view, brought him into conflict with the Roman Catholic church and, in 1633, the Inquisition forced him to make a public recantation and put him under restriction in later life. Therefore, the friar Nicéron was brave enough to acknowledge Galileo's pioneering contribution to astronomy, which was considered a heresy during Pope Urban VIII's lifetime (1568-1644). The astronomers accepted the heliocentric theory no sooner than the 1800s and Pope John Paul II officially acknowledged the Vatican's error in the Galileo affair as ludicrously late as 1992. Art, however, immortalised Galileo as the greatest scientist of all time soon after his discovery. The book *Works of Galileo Galilei*, published in Bologna in 1656, is illustrated with the engraving *Galileo presenting his Telescope to the Muses*, here represented by three women seated on a throne – Urania with stars above her head, flanked by two attendants. Galileo is pointing toward the sun surrounded by the planets, to underline his heliocentric theory. Around the sun, it is possible to discern three of his major astronomical observations – Jupiter and its satellites, the phases of Venus and the triple nature of Saturn.

Anonymous (Bologna, f. 17th).
*Galileo Galilei presenting his
 Telescope to the Muses*, 1656.
 Engraving on paper, 28 x 20.
 Paris, FR: Observatoire
 de Paris - Bibliothèque.



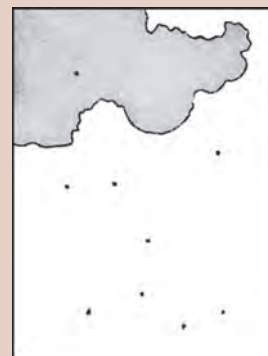
Niki de Saint Phalle
 (France, 1930-2002).
 Still of *le Savant and Camélia with
 le Miraclescope* from
Un rêve plus long que la nuit, 1976.
 Film, 01:35:00.
 Santee, CA: Niki Charitable
 Art Foundation.



David Malin
 (England, b. 1941).
The Pleiades, 2000.
 Courtesy of the Royal Observatory,
 Edinburgh, UK.

Galileo Galilei
 (Pisa, 1564-1642).
*Sidereus Nuncius: Illustration in the page
 for the Pleiades Constellation*, 1610.
 Engraving on paper, 21 x 16. Paris, FR:
 Observatoire de Paris - Bibliothèque.

Nine Shots detail from Duchamp's *The
 Large Glass Completed* (1965).



It is not by chance that in *Victor* (1957-1959), his unfinished novel about Duchamp, Henri-Pierre Roché had “Victor, dressed as an astronomer [...] – a young prophet against his will, untouched by ambition, both revered and disparaged, who overturned many an ancient idol with a single word. To some the Devil, to others the deliverer. No one understood him, he was opposed to every kind of habitual practice, yet he drew everyone’s heart along in his wake. Together with Napoleon and Sarah Bernhardt, he was the most famous French person in America” (Ades 2013:51). The *Mandala* then is like Victor himself, an amalgam of the prophet Tiresias and the astronomer Galileo.

Another connection of the Bride to her dream via a divinator is instanced in Niki de Saint Phalle’s 1976 film *A Dream Longer Than the Night*. At the enquiry of the bridal Princess Camélia (Laura Duke Condominas), the friendly Scientist (Professor Silvio Barandun) explained that in the *Miraclescope*, “We see all the miracles, the marvels and the treasures of this world.” Invited to look through the lens, she was impressed by the beauty of life – the seed as the beginning of life, the wonder of growing flowers, the egg as origin of everything, the deep sea, the sky, the stars, the moon, the planets, the extra-terrestrial beings, the tree of life, men and animals. The Scientist informed Camélia, “Everything you can imagine exists in reality [...] You will find all these treasures on your way. Go and see!”

The *Mandala* on the *Glass* plays an eye-opening role, similar to the *Miraclescope*. After going through it, the desires are enabled to leave the terrestrial half and scatter up towards the Bride’s dream. The landing position of the desires on the celestial half was arrived to by chance. Duchamp launched matches, whose tips were dipped into paint, from a toy cannon at some distance from the glass. He then drilled holes in the glass at the points of contact, to suggest that the desires had the strength to pierce the glassy surface like bullets. Eight of the shots are to be found near the dream’s cloud, while one of them has penetrated the cloud itself. Positioned in the *Glass*’ celestial part, it is very tempting to read the *Shots* cluster as a constellation. In that case, this idea may also relate the *Glass* to Homer’s *Odyssey*. Setting sail off from Calypso’s island of Ogygia towards Ithaca, Odysseus, in his custom built raft, “kept his eye on the Pleiades and late-setting Boötes, / and the Bear, / and the men give also the name of the Wagon, / who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion” (Lattimore 1965:5.272-274). Of these three constellations, the one to include nine stars is the Pleiades. It was known since antiquity to consist of nine bright stars commonly visible to the unaided eye – named after the seven sisters Alcyone, Celaeno, Electra, Merope, Maia, Sterope and Taygeta, along with their parents Atlas and Pleione. Excited by the use of the telescope, Galileo recorded in *Sidereus Nuncius* a total of 36 stars relating to the Pleiades – 6 stars given in outline

were visible via his naked eye and 30 via his use of the telescope. Of course, the subsequent improvement in technology enabled astronomers to record hundreds of stars associated with the Pleiades, but it is its nine brightest stars that have been given names in Greek mythology.

The starry night is also noted in the *Ithaca* episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*, when Bloom accompanies Stephen exiting from his home, which humorously imitates ascension into heaven – “The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit.” (Joyce 1934:17.683). At that moment in time the sky displayed the Sirius star within the Canis Major constellation, the Arcturus star within the Boötes constellation, the Belt asterism within the Orion constellation, the 15 stars that comprise the Hercules constellation and oddly the star Nova that only briefly in 1901 became one of the brightest stars in the Earth's sky (the Pleiades was mentioned as a simile earlier, in 1934:14:407). What is more, Galileo is cited first amongst “astroscopists” who made “independent synchronous discoveries” (Joyce 1934:17.685). The aforementioned starry sky became the backdrop of the scene where the two men urinate alongside one another at Stephen's suggestion in his home's garden, with the urine symbolising the modern equivalent of sacramental wine. At the same time, however, the nearly scientific description of their simultaneous urination with different trajectories appears like a parody of the origin of the *Galaxy* (Greek for Milky Way) with milk spurting from Hera's breast when she found that Zeus' illegitimate son, baby Heracles, was placed to suckle from her while she was asleep.

Richard Hamilton, who imaged *Ulysses*, took the initiative to represent *The Heaventree of Stars* as reflecting the crocheted bedspread over the head to toe sleeping position of Molly and Bloom. This poetic idea was inspired by Joyce's text, “which establishes not only the sleepers' physical relationship but their location relative to Earth and to Earth's motion in space relative to the universe” (quoted in Hamilton 2006:33). The bedroom's background turns into a map of the northern sky, with stars represented as bright spots of different sizes, accompanied by their names and single Greek characters. The relative positions of the earthly bodies Molly and Bloom are at the other end of the heavenly bodies Ursa Major and Leo, suggesting the adage that “men are from Mars, women are from Venus”. More importantly, *The Heaventree of Stars* serves as a dreamy canopy unifying the otherwise divorced couple.

In so far as Duchamp's *Glass* relates to the *Odyssey*, it becomes the pretext to restore the mythological relation of astronomy to navigation. As a matter of fact, Galileo's telescopes offered a profitable sideline for him, selling them to merchants who benefitted both from using them in their sea travels and from trading them with clients all over the world. Moreover, the link between sea and sky may elucidate why the professional space traveller is called *astronaut*, Greek for sailor amongst the stars. The term itself was first instanced in Percy Greg's 1880 book *Across the Zodiac*, an early science fiction novel, where “astronaut” referred to a spacecraft. What is more, if the *Nine Shots* do indeed relate to the Pleiades, it is worth noting that the Greek term for the launch of either a rocket or spaceship is *ektóxeψis*, whose exact translation is ‘shot from the bow’. A whole system of enigmas is thus untangled, whose only prerequisite is to consider the possibility of Duchamp's *Mandala* standing as a sign for Tiresias.



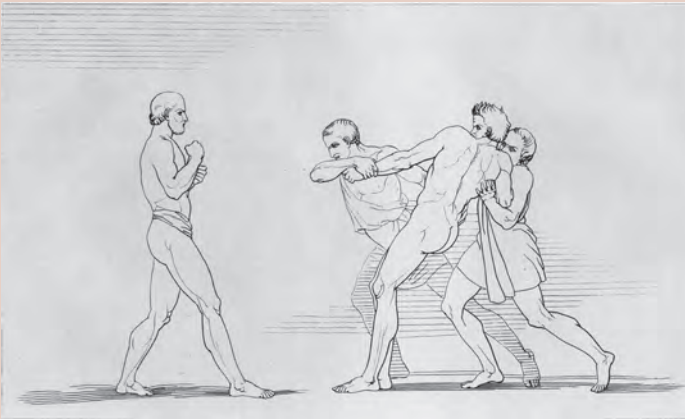
Joseph Strick
(USA, 1923-2010).
Still from the Ithaca Episode
in Ulysses, 1967.
Film, 01:12:00.
London, UK: British
Lion Films.



Richard Hamilton
(England, 1922-2011).
The Heaventree of Stars, 1998.
Iris digital print on paper, 53 x 38.
London, UK: Tate Gallery.

III.12

Duchamp's the *Boxing Match* as the *Odysseus vs Irus Fight*



John Flaxman
(England, 1755-1826).
*The Odyssey of Homer, Plate XXVI:
Odysseus preparing to
fight with Irus, 1805.*
Etching on paper, 17 x 30.
London, UK: Tate Gallery.

so that life would go out of him, as he / went down, or only to stretch him out by hitting him lightly. / And in the division of his heart this way seemed best to him, / so the Achaians would not be suspicious. / They put up their hands and Irus hit him on the right shoulder, / but Odysseus struck the neck underneath the ear and shattered / the bones within and the red blood came in his mouth, filling it. / He dropped, bleating, in the dust, with teeth set in a grimace, / and kicking at the ground with his feet” (Lattimore 1965:18.90-99). Winning this battle of the beggars, Odysseus came closer to his aim. He made some inroads with the suitors and worked his way into their confidence to some extent. Odysseus’ battle with Irus foreshadowed the much grander battle he would have with the suitors later, in Book 22. Therefore, this episode is of strategic significance, even though its realism and violence were not in keeping with the traditional art *milieu*.



Lovis Corinth
(East Prussia, 1858-1925).
*Odysseus fighting with
the Beggar, 1903.*
Oil on canvas, 83 x 108.
Prague, CZ: Národní
Galerie v Praze.

people magnified / his limbs” (Lattimore 1965:18.67-71). Corinth rendered the commotion in Odysseus’ house almost audible in his effort to make the ancient tale come alive (Uhr 1990:164-165).

In the *Odyssey's* Book 18, Homer describes the events surrounding the long-delayed return of Odysseus to Ithaca in elaborate detail. Odysseus returned to his own home as an old beggar, a disguise that actually concealed his strength of body and mind. Once inside the palace, he met another beggar named Irus. As bearer of the suitors’ thought, his name is a gender parody of Iris, the female messenger of the gods (Valaoritis 2012:80). Because Irus begged regularly there, he did not want any other beggars to move in on what he considered his territory. Accordingly, Irus tried to drive Odysseus away from the palace. When a quarrel broke out between the two beggars, the suitors were amused to see the two men fight. The suitors also decided that the winner of the fight could have his choice of the food that was prepared for their dinner. So, Homer described the fight as follows, “Odysseus pondered / whether to hit him

Towards the end of his life, when asked about his reasons for going to Munich, Duchamp answered, “it was because I had met a cow painter in Paris, I mean a German who painted cows, the very best cows, of course and admirer of Lovis Corinth and all those people...” (Russell 1968:54). Duchamp would indeed be initiated to the paintings of Corinth through his friend Max Bergmann who had great admiration for him (*Marcel Duchamp in Munich 1912* 2012:11). One of the most unforgettable paintings of Corinth is *Odysseus fighting with the Beggar* of 1903. It is a boisterous composition whose genesis is well documented, right down to the selection of the costumes, as attested by the painter’s letters to his fresh wife, Charlotte Berend (Corinth 1979:76-81). What makes this particular work especially interesting is that in it Corinth simultaneously eschewed the academic decorum traditional for such a subject and followed Homer’s narrative almost to the letter. To the suitors’ astonishment, Odysseus “girded up his rags about his body, displaying / his thighs, splendid at large and his ponderous arms; and Athena / standing close beside the shepherd of the

Despite its increasing appeal to the modern public, boxing is actually a sport first recorded in prehistoric times. The well-known Bronze Age fresco from Acroteri on the Aegean island of Thera depicts two naked boys wearing belts and boxing gloves. However, modernity seems to have associated with boxing more than ever before. A characteristic example is found in René Clair's experimental film *Entr'acte* (*Intermission*), which premiered as filler for Les Ballets Suédois production of *Relâche*, both invested with contemporary music by Erik Satie, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, on 28 May 1924. In the middle of the film, a sequence of bright boxing gloves in action, superposed on an obscure scene of busy Parisian crossroads, appear to echo the jam and noise of modern life.



Anonymous (Thera, c. 16th BC).
Boxing Children, c. 1550 BC.
 Fresco from Room B1, Building B,
 Acroteri, Thera. Athens, GR: National Archeological Museum.

A story from real life may elucidate the role of boxing in art. Arthur Cravan (1887-1918) was a dadaïst boxer who led a provocative existence as a vagabond around Europe until he ended in Paris before the War. He published and edited the *Maintenant...* (*Now...*) magazine that, although disguised as a critical review, was actually devoted to offending the new modernists. In his little periodical, which he used to sell at the entrance of the Salon des Indépendants in Paris, Cravan demanded that Marie Laurencin should be publicly spanked (Ades 2013:65). He was remarkably successful in this. His large physique was an asset in the ensuing quarrels. On his way out of Europe to escape the War, he and African-American boxer Jack Johnson (1878-1946), until recently the world heavyweight champion, found themselves broke in Barcelona. A match was arranged to raise funds and Cravan, reputedly drunk, lost the fight in the sixth round. This whole story of Cravan's life is coincidentally very evocative of the Homeric description of the tramp Irus, who appeared to be a barking dog, but proved to be a mere bubble bursting in thin air.



René Clair (France, 1898-1981).
Entr'acte, 1924.
 Experimental film, 22:00.
 Paris, FR: Société Nouvelle des Acacias.



Poster for the Monumental de Barcelona's Fight of Jack Johnson vs Arthur Cravan, 23 Apr. 1916.
 Private Collection.
 Courtesy Roger L. Conover, Cambridge, MA.



Francis Picabia
(France, 1879-1953).
Cover for 391, no. 19:
Portrait of Rose Sélavy, 1924.
Offset print on paper, 55 x 37.
New York, NY: The Museum
of Modern Art Library.

The fact of the matter is that Duchamp followed boxing and is recorded to have exclaimed “An idiot!” when complaining for losing all his bets on the result of the Carpentier vs Dempsey fight in New Jersey, where the Frenchman was knocked out (see *Ephemerides*, entry for 2/7/1921). Actually, he meant no lasting offence to his fellow countryman. Georges Carpentier (1894-1975) was not just a boxer famous for his skill and hard punch, but was awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille Militaire. He was also nicknamed “The Orchid Man” by his manager, François Deschamps, because of his polished debonair appearance. His profile and dandyish qualities were strikingly similar to those of Duchamp. The similarity of the two men’s profiles inspired Picabia to conflate their portrait on the cover of the last issue of 391 in October 1924. Picabia reproduced a profile portrait of the boxer taking artistic license to slightly adjust his facial features and add the pipe clenched

tightly in his teeth, making him look more like Duchamp. With pure dadaïst disposition, the author crossed out Carpentier’s signature and replaced it with Rose Sélavy’s, affecting Duchamp’s crisis of gender identity. Made present through her signature, the feisty Rose could step in, entertaining the ring against Picabia’s opponents (*Inventing Marcel Duchamp* 2009:168). More important, however, the text that frames the portrait on all four sides forms the square area of a boxing ring. The term *l’instanénéisme* (*Instantaneism*) and its derivatives, printed numerous times across the cover, highlights what Camfield called Picabia’s “antidote to Surrealism” (Camfield 1979:208). The belligerent interplay between imagery and text evokes the editor’s intentions to use this journal as a battleground to carry out his assault on André Breton and his nascent Surrealism.



Alexander Archipenko
(Ukraine, 1887-1964).
The Boxing, 1913-1914, Paris.
Painted plaster, 60 x 42 x 41.
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum, New York, NY.

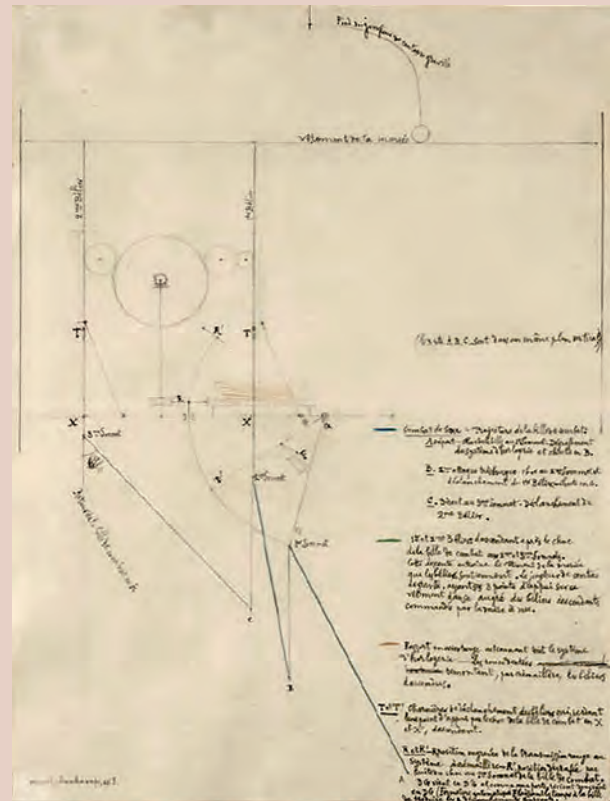
The violence involved in boxing seemed to be in tune with the avant-garde’s ideas. A key work to be examined is by Alexander Archipenko, who belonged to the circle around the Duchamp brothers and attended their salons. In 1908, Archipenko emigrated from Moscow to Paris and in 1912, joined the Section d’Or group, which included Marcel. The fact that Archipenko’s *Médrano* (*Juggler*) of 1912 (destroyed) has been compared to Duchamp’s 1912 painting *Nude Descending a Staircase* and that both artists exhibited at the 1913 Armory Show, evidences that the former was keeping pace with the latter. Owing to their friendship, Duchamp introduced Archipenko to Katherine Dreier on her visit to Paris in November 1919 (*The Société Anonyme and the Dreier Bequest at Yale University* 1984:43). For an advertisement of Archipenko’s exhibition in the issue of *The Arts* for February-March 1921, which Duchamp was instrumental in organising at the gallery of the Société Anonyme, 19 East 47th Street, New York, the latter punned the artist’s name as “Archie Pen Co.” (*The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* 2006:35). Archipenko’s *La Boxe* (*The Boxing*) of 1913-1914 is a complex composition of two bodies, reduced to geometric forms, in dynamic contact determined in purely sculptural terms, independent of painterly associations. It was based on cubist principles, regardless of the fact that the artist himself dubiously claimed his work had nothing to do with Cubism (Archipenko 1960:49). In Duchamp’s view, “Archipenko’s important contribution to sculpture has been to do away with volumes” (*The Société Anonyme and the Dreier Bequest at Yale University* 1984:43), which is what his boxers demonstrate – the concentration around negative space.

It must be more than a coincidence that Duchamp created his *Boxing Match* drawing in 1913, as the second challenge (after the *Oculist Witnesses*) of the Bachelors’ desires for the Bride. While it is plausible that he and Archipenko talked about boxing as a subject in art, Duchamp would unlikely disclose its relation, if any, to Homer’s Book 18. As a matter of fact, the distance between the two works is rather unbridgeable. In any case, despite being a preliminary study for a detail of the *Glass*, it was not included there in the end, but in *The Green Box* of 1934. *The Large Glass Completed* etching of 1965 indicates that its intended position was in the *Bachelor Apparatus*, upper right, over the *Mandala* and under the *Juggler of Gravity* (see pp 146-147). *The Boxing Match*,

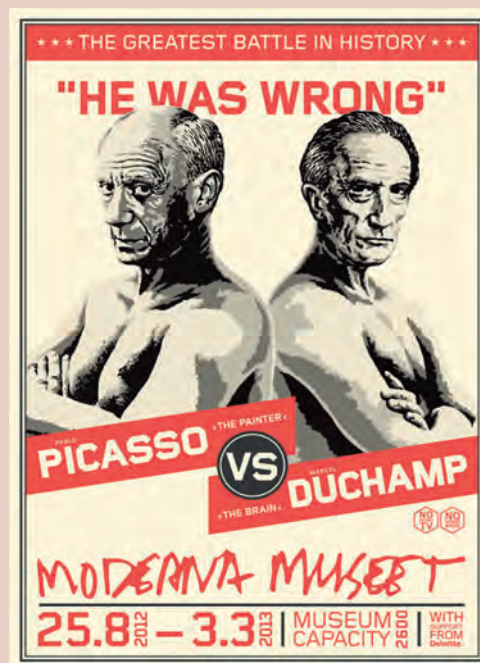
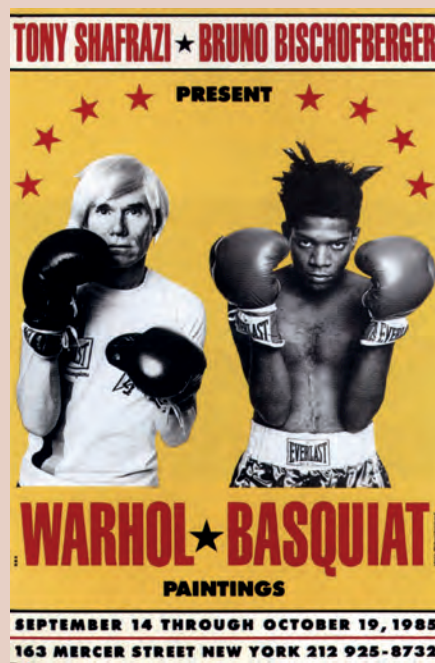
according to the writing accompanying the picture, is a contraption of doubtful technological probability, although it fulfils an essential function in the argument of the completed work – stripping the Bride by lowering two levers. Its mechanism looks like a flipper machine. It is possible that the initial idea for this element is connected with a project mentioned in the posthumous notes – “(In slow motion) Boxing match. Get hold of a film of a real boxing match which takes place in white gloves boxing.” (Matisse 1983:197). What is seen in the schematic drawing is a weird mechanism whose function appears as follows, “a cannonball would have been thrown three times on to three different points, thus releasing two *béliers* (rams) which, as they descended, would have pulled down the Bride’s dress; this action would have made the controller of the centres of gravity dance, with its three feet standing on the lady’s dress; the rams would have descended on a zip fastener and travelled back up along it, pulled by the cogs of a contraption from the world of watchmaking, then climbed to the upper limit of the glass; the mechanical force of this contraption would have come from a band of red steel.” (Ramírez 1998:118). The origin of the balls’ energy was defined in one of the posthumous notes, where it says that the explosion of the liquid gas “fires the cannons of the boxing match and the cannon ball and in addition to its power of projection acquires the ability to lift mechanically” (Matisse 1983:140).

However, Duchamp expressed his dissatisfaction with his *Boxing Match*, “...I felt it was not quite what I wanted”, he told Sweeney (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:129). Nevertheless, its relation to the *Glass* is definite, its significant function to the stripping is given and its reference to the *Odyssey* supported.

In closing, it is worth noting that the boxing theme has hitherto been used twice to promote exhibitions of artists fighting on the intellectual ring. The first case related to the collaborative work of artists that may be considered Duchamp’s followers. When art dealer Bruno Bischofberger promoted a unique two-man show at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York (14/9-19/10/1985), his iconic poster presented on one side a waifish Andy Warhol (1928-1987) standing in a t-shirt and boxing gloves, raising the right glove and on the other side a shirtless Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), posing as the challenger, both gloves raised, eyes daring the viewer from beneath his brow. The second exhibition of the Moderna Museet (25/8/2012-3/3/2013) concerns the fight in the art ring between Duchamp (1887-1968) and Picasso (1881-1973), the couple of artists whose different artistic sensibilities defined art in the 20th century – the former representing conceptualism and the latter militant aesthetics. The result of their fight will forever be open and depend on the public’s reception of them through the passing of time. More important however, the boxing match theme stands as a cryptic sign especially of male aggression, with reference to broader war conflict, like the *Iliad*, that is one of the three deadliest sins in human history – alongside lust and intoxication.



Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
Boxing Match, 1913, Neuilly.
Pencil and crayon on paper, 42 x 31.
Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia
Museum of Art.



Poster for Bruno Bischofberger’s
Warhol vs Basquiat
exhibition at Tony Shafrazi Gallery,
New York, 1985.

Poster for Daniel Birnbaum and
Ronald Jones’
Picasso vs Duchamp / He Was Wrong
exhibition at Moderna Museet,
Stockholm, 2013.

III.13

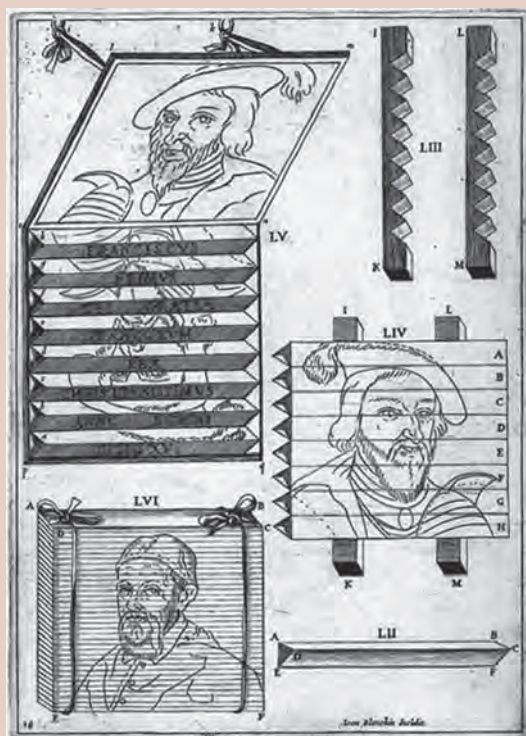
Duchamp's *Wilson-Lincoln Effect* as the *Athena vs Poseidon Contest*

In his cryptic way, hiding the sources of his profound insights, Duchamp added to the walls that protected his enigma. He did, however, leave indirect if not misleading clues in bits and pieces of paper with jottings and scribbles for the persistent researcher of his work in posterity. Thus a 1914 note from *The White Box* (published in 1967) contains the germ of his *Wilson-Lincoln Effect* that was to offer the final challenge (after the *Oculist Witnesses* and the *Boxing Match*) of the Bachelors' desire for the Bride on the *Glass*, but never executed. This note was a reminder to see the whole section on perspective in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, especially Jean-François Nicéron's *Thaumaturgus Opticus*, a 1646 Latin treatise on geometric optics and perspective based on direct vision by this French friar of the Order of Minims. In fact, the *Thaumaturgus* is a posthumous expanded version of a shorter French treatise that he published in 1638 as *La perspective curieuse*

(*The Curious Perspective*). Its sections of *Catoptrics* (reflections on mirrors) and *Dioptrics* (refraction through lenses), which Nicéron did not live to translate for inclusion in the *Thaumaturgus*, served as a source of inspiration for Duchampian themes (another such theme is explored in III.11).

Duchamp must have been impressed by Nicéron's optical device of triangular prisms – that is the cutting up and placement of strips of two distinct images on separated but parallel planes of prisms, so that one discrete and recomposed picture emerges from one point of sight and the other from a different point of sight at right angles to the first. It is a geometrically and mathematically accurate contrivance, because orthogonally set planes are mathematically independent and thus define separate dimensions. Nicéron illustrated a lovely example of this device on Plate 18 of the Book III on *Catoptrics* of *The Curious Perspective*, accompanied by a fascinating discussion on pages 78-80 of the text. His device features on one aspect King François Ier of France (1494-1547) and on another aspect Pope Urban VIII (1568-1644). Arguably, Nicéron chose these two examples to represent two opposed sources of authority – secular and religious power.

Duchamp was the first to think of using U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) in 1861 and Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) in 1913 as the two exemplars for Nicéron's optical device, what he called the "Wilson-Lincoln Effect". Perhaps he decided to invent the conjunction because Lincoln was the most famous of his predecessors, while Wilson was the man then incumbent when Duchamp first moved to America in 1915 (Gould and Shearer 2000). The fact of the matter is that Lincoln and Wilson ideally lent themselves to Duchamp's effect, a wonderful metaphor for completely independent points of view. If indeed the *Glass* has a Homeric overtone, then it follows that the *Wilson-Lincoln Effect* is reminiscent of the antagonism



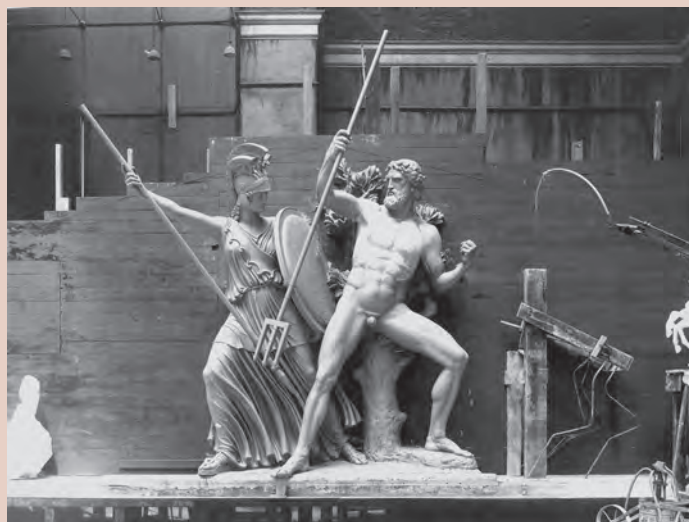
Jean-François Nicéron (France, 1613-1646). Plate 18 in *La Perspective Curieuse*, 1638. Paris, FR: Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.



Stills from animation for Duchamp's *Wilson-Lincoln Effect* by Rhonda Roland Shearer and Robert Slawinski, 2000. Courtesy of Art Science Research Laboratory, New York, NY.



between Athena and Poseidon in terms of Odysseus and Penelope. In this respect Athena, a goddess of wisdom, was aiding their reunion, while Poseidon, a god ruling the waters, fought against it. This antagonism culminated in the legendary contest between them on the Athenian Acropolis, to determine the patron of the capital city of Attica. Their difference is best manifested there – the first to go was Poseidon, who lifted his massive trident and, at the point where it struck the earth, a frothy spring burst out producing water, which to the dismay of people was salty. When Athena’s turn came, her act was far less dramatic. She quietly knelt and buried something in the ground, which in time grew into an olive tree. This turned out to be a much more useful gift, granting the Athenians, not only the olives themselves as sustenance, but also a source of oil for lighting lamps, cooking food, conditioning skin and preserving raw materials as well as the wood from the olive tree, which is an excellent fuel for heat from fire because of its high calorific value and slow-burning properties. Of course, Athena’s intelligence prevailed, which explains why rainfall and water levels in Athens are rather low. This episode was most memorably depicted on the *Athenian Parthenon’s* west pediment. It was fortuitously recorded in the drawings of the sculptures that the French painter Jacques Carrey (1649-1726) produced in 1674 (now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris), before the destruction of the sculptures by the Venetian bombardment of 1687. This section was reconstructed by the Hungarian sculptor George Julian Zolnay (1863-1949), who in 1895 was employed to make models, based on Carrey’s record, for the ornamentation of the full-scale replica of the original *Parthenon* in Nashville, Tennessee. This replica, originally built of perishable materials in 1897 as part of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, was highly popular with residents and visitors alike and Duchamp would likely be aware of it. Indeed, it was so topical that after its defacement from the weather in the next 20 years, it was carefully rebuilt in concrete, in a project that started in 1920; the exterior was completed in 1925 and the interior in 1931 (Creighton 1989:20). The sculptors for the 1920s permanent version were Leopold Scholz and Belle Kinney.



The Nashville Parthenon is indicative of how the gods of Homer were alive in the Greek Revival architectural movement in the turn of the 19th and 20th century, predominantly in the United States. It was in such a spirit that Duchamp may have subverted the Homeric contest between Athena and Poseidon via his *Wilson-Lincoln Effect*.

Leopold Scholz (Austria, 1877-1946) & Belle Kinney (USA, 1890-1959). Models of Athena and Poseidon for the replica of the Parthenon in Nashville, 1923. Courtesy of The Parthenon in Centennial Park, Nashville, TN.

III.14

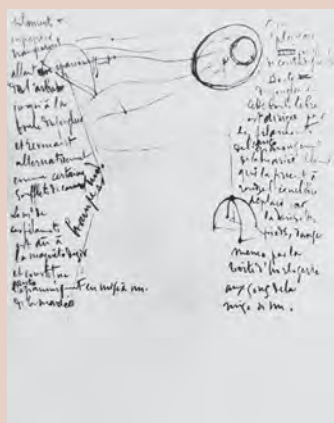
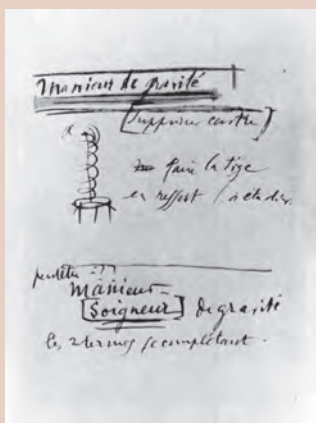
The *Odyssey's Anagnorismos* as Duchamp's Affirmative Nature – Yes, but to what?

Digital rendering of *apo michanis theos* (god from machine).



In one of the posthumous notes for the *Glass*, Duchamp wrote, “The picture in general is only a series of variations on ‘the law of gravity’” (Matisse 1983:104). One has the impression that the *Bride* floats anchorless amidst the sky. Actually, the entirety of the *Bride's Domain* – including herself, her *Apparatus* and the *Cinematic Blossoming* – which is supposed to be defying gravity, is suspended from three discreet yet evident hooks at the top of the *Glass*. Upon careful inspection on the original version, a thread-like shape, trailing upwards from the *Bride Apparatus*, seems to have come loose, which means that the whole of the *Bride's Domain* really depends on the suspension of the *Blossoming*, essentially her dream. The aforementioned note also reveals that the

Bride “uses the elevator of gravity at will” (ib. 1980:104). This description resembles the ancient Greek notion of *apo michanis theos* (literally ‘god from machine’, *deus ex machina* in Latin), a lifting and slewing crane used in ancient Greek temples and theatres to raise harnessed actors or props into the air from or onto the floor from behind a façade, whenever they had to pretend to be flying. This solution is a means of deception and as such forms the *Glass's* greatest irony.



Marcel Duchamp (France, 1887-1968). *Handler of Gravity*, 1915, Paris. Manuscript note on paper, 15 x 11. Villiers-sous-Grez, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives. | Marcel Duchamp (ib.). *Juggler of Gravity*, 1915, Paris. Manuscript note on paper, 20 x 16. Villiers-sous-Grez, FR: Marcel Duchamp Archives. | Marcel Duchamp (ib.). *Tender of Gravity* in the *Exposition Internationale de Surréalisme*, 1947, Paris, FR: Galerie Maeght

At the same time, another variation on gravitation concerns the *Juggler of Gravity* who serves as intermediary between the *Bride* and the *Bachelors*. Though not transferred onto the composition of the *Glass*, the *Juggler* was fully designed. In the *Handler of Gravity* note of 1915, Duchamp elaborated on the figure, visualising him as a rod surrounded by a spring on three legs and describing him as the “handler (tender) of gravity”, explaining, “these two terms are complementary”. The *Juggler of Gravity* note of the same year shows his meeting at last with the *Bride*. In the sketch, the two appear against one another at a distance. The *Juggler*, as a four-legged table, performs a love dance on the *Bride's* Garment. On the table's upper surface he carries precariously a ball, held in suspension by invisible powers. As Duchamp inscribed, the “transparent paper filaments alternately blossoming out from the arbor [of the *Bride*] to the *Juggler's* ball and coming back like certain party whistles” (translated in Schwarz 2000:623). This mysterious personage appears in this note as handling a ball that the *Bride's* filaments are “[licking and displacing] as it pleases” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:48). The love dance was repeated in a subsequent tableau called *Tender of Gravity*. Designed by Duchamp and executed by Roberto Matta and Frederick Kiesler, this tableau was one of the altars at the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* at Galerie Maeght, Paris, in July-August 1947. It was a box with an open front and its constituent elements, all of which relate to the *Glass*, were

as follows: rising obliquely from the left to command the scene, the *Juggler* in the form of a bistro table with four legs and a ball fixed on its tilted surface; on the left of the floor the foam-rubber breast of the Bride presented on a dessert plate; in the far right corner an empty dessert plate with a fork stuck into it suggesting the consumption of the breast; at centre right, a bouquet of flowers alluding to the *Blossoming*; resting on the floor against a back wall, a cheese grater alluding to the *Sieves*; in between the plates a flatiron bearing the inscription “REFAIRE LE PASSÉ” (repeat the past) on its base; resting on the right wall across a mental patient’s drawing of baguettes; on the left wall an enlargement of the note concerning the *3 Standard Stoppages*; along the upper border, three lengths of string referring to the Bride’s filaments. Significantly, Duchamp’s note practically announced the overarching theme of this altar, as Schwarz understood it, “the transformation of the Bachelor into a *deus ex machina*, as personified by the Juggler of Gravity” (Schwarz 2000:790). It would then follow that the *Glass* enacts the *anagnorismos* (recognition) between the Bride and the Juggler as a couple of similar pseudo-gods. In Joyce’s *Ithaca* episode, Bloom too is described as a circus performer of sorts. His entrance home in-lieu-of-a-key inspired in him a “stratagem” (Joyce 1934:17.652) that Joyce raised to the realm of art, comparable to the *Trial of the Bow* (see III.10). Bloom “allowed his body to move freely in space” (*ib.* 1934:17.652) acrobatically as he climbed over the area railings down to his home’s side door.

Jean Suquet published Duchamp’s drawing entitled *Comment le Soigneur de gravité traduit Oui en Yes* (*How the Tender of Gravity translates Oui into Yes*) in his book *The Large Glass: A Guided Tour* of 1992. It represents the two words ‘Oui’ in French and ‘Yes’ in English, which, despite their obvious formal differences, are of the same affirmative meaning and are both written with three letters. Their particular spelling is composed in such a special way as to form in both languages a homunculus that is physiognomically very close to the *trismegistus* Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity as he appears in the notes of 1915. His body personalises affirmation from head to toe.

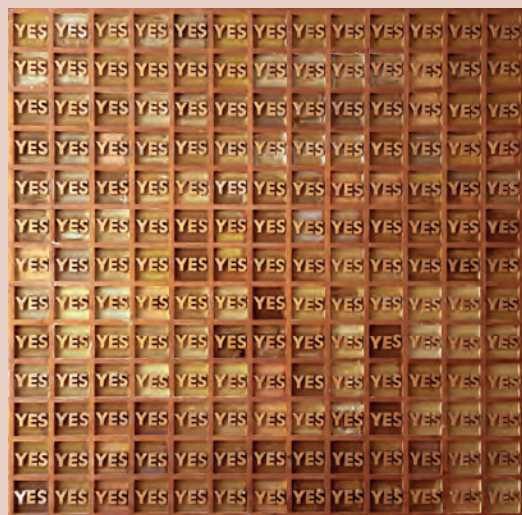
As the centrepiece of Homer’s *Odyssey* comes with the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope (Jones 1998:211), the scene of affirmation is its climax and has likewise been monumentalised in Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The adverb *nai*, the three letter Greek word closest to the English ‘yes’, does not appear as such in the *Odyssey*. Instead, Penelope extends periphrastically to Odysseus her “thought that we two, always together, / should enjoy our youth and then come to the threshold of old age.” (Lattimore 1965:23.211-212). This evasion of the most expected word in the whole epic, is reminiscent of the play with words for which Greek philosophers are famed. The expression of affirmation, when considered from the perspective of modern European languages, seems to be a simple affair. However, the affirmative response in the ancient Greek language, is a sophisticated mechanism featuring a wide range of tropes, expressions and techniques of special service to philosophy (Shalev 2003:351). Considering the ‘Pataphysical connection of Alfred Jarry’s *Faustroll* to Homer’s *Odyssey* (see I.3), it follows that the benevolent doctor took to teach his companion, the baboon Bosse-de-Nage, who could utter in affirmation nothing more than a tautological monosyllable “Ha ha”, 6+3+3 affirmative responses (notice that the numbers are based on the layout of pages 38-30 in the posthumous Fasquelle edition and the final 3 responses are signalled in the previous page spread by an asterisk) made to Socrates by his interlocutors in the original Greek! This long list, which includes the simple trigram *nai*, is presented in alphabetical order, based on every response’s initial, from *alpha* to *omega*. Dr Jill Fell considered this list of responses as conversational ‘oil’ or ways of encouraging an interlocutor to continue, as opposed to maintaining silence, rather than enthusiastic affirmation (in an email to the author dated 16 August 2015). In any case, taking into account Duchamp’s exchange between Bride and Bachelors, Jarry seems to propose Socrates as the first party in the exchange between Penelope and Suitors.

Marcel Duchamp
(France, 1887-1968).
*Comment le Soigneur de gravité traduit
Oui en Yes*, c. 1950.
Reproduced in Jean Suquet,
Le Grand Verre :
Visite Guidée (1992).



Alfred Jarry (France, 1873-1907).
*Gestes et opinions du docteur
Faustroll, pataphysicien*. Paris, FR:
Eugène Fasquelle, 1911:28-30. Paris,
FR: Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The only such mad parallel to Jarry's aforementioned obsession with affirmation is found in the *Penelope* episode in Joyce's *Ulysses*. In a letter to his friend Frank Budgen, the author explained, "*Penelope* is the clou of the book. The first sentence contains 2500 words. There are eight sentences in the episode. It begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like a huge earthball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because, bottom, woman, yes*." (Joyce, letter to Frank Budgen, end Feb. 1921, quoted in Ellmann 1959:501). So, for Joyce the 'yes' is of female gender and identifies with Molly's sex. And this is how Molly's soliloquy ended, "...or shall I wear red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to as again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes." (Joyce 1934:18.768).



Joe Tilson
(England, b. 1928).
Page 1: Penelope, 1969.
Oil on wood relief, 200 x 200 x 5.
London, UK: British Library.

son's *Page 1: Penelope* of 1969. A 3D block letter 'YES' in a box of its own appears 169 times in this work of square format. Despite being formally similar, every case of 'yes' is unique owing to differing earth-tones that alter its chromatic background, thus composing an aesthetically pleasing and conceptually intriguing ensemble.

For Duchamp the titles of his works are part of his pictorial experiments. He noted, "There is a tension between my titles and my pictures. The titles are not the pictures nor vice versa, but they work on each other. The titles add a new dimension; they are like new or added colours, or better yet, they may be compared to varnish through which the picture may be seen and amplified" (Schwarz 1969:83). The work in question is referred to as the *Glass* for reasons of brevity. Actually, its official title, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, is intentionally long and reads like a narrative. Paz found in the full title all its elements – "myth, barrack-room humour, eroticism, pseudoscience and irony" (Paz 1978:33). What is more, however, the full title in French, *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*, offers an opportunity for puns. The most obvious one, as suggested in a sketch by Duchamp in *The Green Box*, is that the beginnings of the words 'Mariée' and 'célibataires' combined produce the name 'Marcel', which suggests this work as a self-portrait. According to Hopkins, such a reading out of oppositional terms "enacts the reconciliation of the gender-specific components of Duchamp's previous works under the aegis of the artist's bi-gendered identity" (Hopkins 1998:9). In addition, the other pun concerns the French language and is thus more conceptual. The French word *même* (even) reads like an adverb translating as 'even' or 'same', which makes the phrase stumble. Duchamp said to Cabanne, "I added a comma and 'even', an adverb which makes no sense, since it relates to nothing in the picture or title. Thus, it was an adverb in the most beautiful demonstration of adverbness. It has no

In his essay *Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce*, Jacques Derrida counted more than 222 cases of the 'yes' word in its explicit form, but even further cases occur covertly in longer words that contain it (Derrida 1992:266). Subsequently, he organised the occurrence of 'yes' into ten modalities, "the *yes* of question form, the *yes* of rhythmic breathing in the form of monologic self-apprrobation, the *yes* of obedience, the *yes* of making an agreement on fact, the *yes* of a passionate breathing of desire, the *yes* of exactly calculated and precise breathing, the *yes* of absentminded politeness, the *yes* of emphatic confirmation, the *yes* of open approval and the *yes* of insisted confidence" (ib. 1992:306-308). It is all these modalities of 'yes' that seem to be evoked in Joe Tilson's

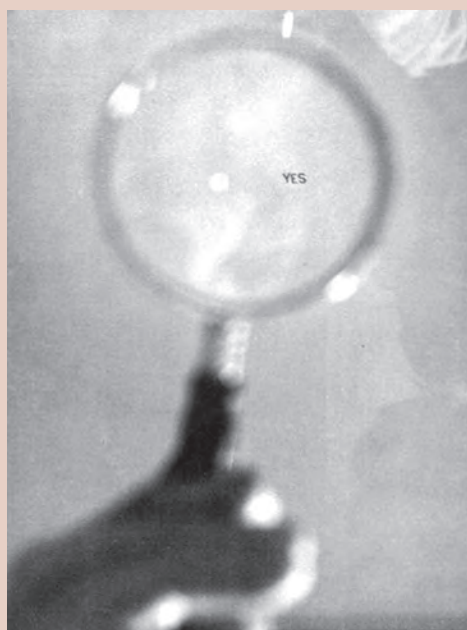
Henri Cartier-Bresson
(France, 1908-2004).
Marcel and Teeny Duchamp, 1968.
Gelatin silver print on paper, 17 x 25.
Washington, DC: Smithsonian
Institution.



meaning. This ‘antisense’ interested me a lot on the positive level [...] It’s a ‘non-sense.’” (Cabanne 1971:40). The translation of *même* was eventually established as ‘even’, but such a literal translation is slippery when it obviously does not work, as is the case here. It so happens that the word *même* is homophonous to the verb *m’aime*, which translates ‘loves me’. This meaning of the pun, which is a great aspiration in life, was experienced only late in the artist’s life. Henri Cartier-Bresson’s photograph of Marcel and Teeny, taken during the last year of Duchamp’s life, captured the decisive moment that immortalised the quality of their relationship, which Teeny’s son Paul Matisse described as “harmonic” (Tomkins 1996:385). However, taking into consideration Duchamp’s denial of *même* interpreted as *m’aime*, Paz suggested that, as a particle of hesitancy, it contains two Duchampian solvents – irony and indifference (Paz 1978:33). In any case, the pun makes the adverb haunted by the verb so as to translate *même* as either ‘loves me, just the same’ or ‘loves me, even so’. This solution, as so often in English, gives an exquisite hidden ambiguity. This, then, would suggest that, though the Bride appears available to prospective suitors, her heart is emotionally given to ‘me’, the author/beholder. As a matter of fact, the posthumous Bachelor-oriented note 153 concludes with the Bride’s role as a “married divinity!” (Matisse 1983:153). The readiness of the promiscuity of the married Bride is not referring to adultery, but rather to affirmation of life.

Duchamp’s ‘yes’ reflected his life-affirming stance, as attested by Professor Herman Parret, who wrote, “Duchamp, as Nietzsche wanted it, says YES to life. *ÉpanOUissement* (blossoming), *éblOUissement* (bedazzlement), *jOUissance* (bliss), at the heart of these three typically Duchampian words there is the last word: OUI (YES).” (*TRANS/formers* 2010:36). This enlightening observation, which is confined to French and has no analogue in English, was made by Suquet (Suquet 1998:77). William Copley’s moving obituary of Duchamp, which appeared in the *New York Times* on 13 October 1968, also emphasised Duchamp’s affirmative nature – “‘There is no solution because there is no problem.’ This was his way of saying ‘Yes’ to the universe, the galaxies, the magno-microcosms, the explosions, the implosions, nature.” (www.williamncopley.com/biography).

Duchamp was a significant influence on Yoko Ono and attended her happenings in New York through the 1960s. In her legendary *Unfinished Paintings* exhibition at Indica Gallery, London (8-18/11/1966), Ono presented the powerful *Ceiling Painting*, a large sheet of paper handwritten with the block letter word “YES”, framed, glazed and hung on the ceiling. As the text, intentionally rendered in minuscule size, was impossible to read from the floor, a stepladder invited viewers to ascend it and complete the work by reading it with a magnifying lens hanging from the frame. When this was done, the open-ended affirmation of the word “YES” became the viewer’s reward for making the climb, comparable to a pilgrim climbing the mountain to ask the enlightened monk about the meaning of life (Munroe 2000:96). It is an answer without a question, to paraphrase Duchamp, a solution without a problem. The viewer affected by this work most was songwriter John Lennon (1940-1980), until then a stranger, unacquainted with Ono, who said, “That ‘YES’ made me stay” (Sheff 1981:92). He married Ono in 1969. Ono’s original *Ceiling Painting* gave the title to the seminal *YES Yoko Ono* retrospective exhibition that travelled to 13 museums in the U.S., Canada, Japan and Korea from 2000 through 2003, disseminating the word YES as the ultimate emblem of love and peace.



Yoko Ono
(Japan, b. 1933).
The Artist looking at the
***Ceiling Painting*, 7 November 1966,**
Indica Gallery, London.

Text on paper, glass, metal frame,
metal chain, magnifying glass and
painted ladder, framed text: 56 x 65.
Courtesy of the Artist, New York,
NY. | Detail.

III.15

The *Glass*' Cracking as the *Odyssey*'s Unhappy Premonition

Though collective consciousness regards Odysseus and Penelope as an archetypal couple with an unbeatable longing for one another, both parties deviated from the ideal. On the one hand, Odysseus had been actively promiscuous, with rumours of an illegitimate child (the *Telegony* is a lost ancient Greek epic poem about Telegonus, son of Odysseus by Circe), throughout his homeward journey. On the other hand, before being saved by her lawful husband, Penelope is portrayed as increasingly weakening to her bond under pressure, not only by the suitors but also by the grown Telemachus, who prays her to leave her husband's palace (Lattimore 1965:19.533). Significantly, beginning to take Odysseus for dead, along with wifehood it is also motherhood that was withering away. When Athena bade Telemachus return immediately from his visit

to Menelaus, lest Penelope accept one of the suitors, the goddess concluded with a sweeping generalisation, "For you know what the mind is like in the breast of a woman. / She wants to build up the household of the man who marries her, / and of former children and of her beloved and wedded husband, / she has no remembrance, when he is dead, nor does she think of him" (*ib.* 1965:15.20-23). Of course, the story eventually led to the longed-for reunion of Odysseus and Penelope. However, after their reunion, Odysseus informed her, "Dear wife, we have not yet come to the limit of all our / trials. There is unmeasured labour left for the future, / both difficult and great and all of it I must accomplish" (*ib.* 1965:23.248-250), leaving a hint about Tiresias' ominous prophecy. At Penelope's insistence to know, Odysseus warns her, "Your heart will have no joy in this; and I myself am not happy" (*ib.* 1965:23.266). He tells her that he is destined to travel to many distant places and that death will come to him from the sea (*ib.* 1965:23.267-283). Listening to such an unhappy premonition, after her legendary patience, Penelope is left with no choice but to finally respond with wishful thinking, "If the gods are accomplishing a more prosperous age / then there is hope that you shall have an escape from your troubles." (*ib.* 1965:23.286-287). Finally, the *Odyssey*'s Book 24 closes with Athena halting the battle between Odysseus and the families of the slain suitors and reconciling them. However, the foreboding of a pessimistic development of events hovers in the air. In *The Divine Comedy*'s Canto XXVI, Dante describes Odysseus recounting his last adventure. In his hubris, he and his men travelled beyond the Pillars of Heracles and over unknown seas until they arrived beneath the firmament at the Earth's southern pole. There, their ship finally sank in a raging tempest shortly after they sighted the immeasurably high mount of Purgatory, set upon a solitary circular island within the vast ocean (Dante 1914:XXVI.90-142).



Anonymous (Florence, c. 14th).
*Divine Comedy: The Wreck of
the Ship of Odysseus*, c. 1390.
Manuscript illumination.
Vatican City State, VA: Biblioteca
Apostolica Vaticana.

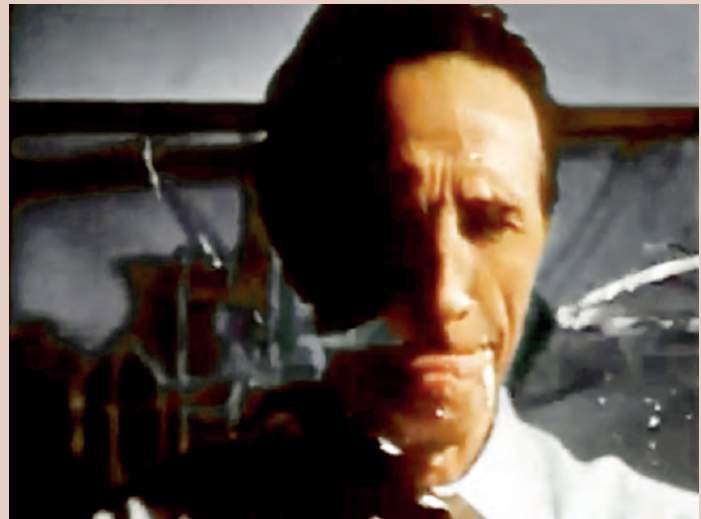
It is likely that Duchamp had the *Odyssey*'s unhappy premonition in mind when in *The Green Box* note he wrote, "The last state of this nude Bride, before the orgasm which may (might) bring about her fall graphically" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:43.7). Having chosen a Bachelor, the Bride would have to descend from her dream to level with her lover-to-be. The catch is that, once the Bride crosses the *Horizon* line, she is bound to be destroyed by the *Scissors*, which are put in motion by the *Chariot* of the *Bachelors*. Schwarz described the *Scissors* as "castrating [with] menacing blades" (Schwarz 1969:625). Their role, as Golding suggested, is rather anti-climactic (Golding 1973:70). Henderson considered them among "Duchamp's wittiest and most inventive creations" (Henderson 1998:220). The prospect of the Bride's destruction confirms that the subject of the *Glass* is sex as an endlessly frustrating and ever unfulfilled process. All its sequences form disguised accounts of incomplete or dysfunctional sexual acts. In this respect, the *Glass* is a totally antiheroic work.

The fact of the *Glass*' pessimistic meaning and message brings this study to the issue of its unfortunate breakage. In 1923 Duchamp left it in a state of incompleteness. Following its inclusion in the Société Anonyme's *International Exhibition of Modern Art* at the Brooklyn Museum, from 19 November 1926 to 10 January 1927, during shipment by truck to Katherine Dreier's Connecticut home, a chance accident caused it to break. In the 1956 television interview conducted by James Johnson Sweeney, Duchamp recounted, "They put the two panes on top of one another on a truck, flat, not knowing what they were carrying and bounced for 60 miles into Connecticut and that's the result!" (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:127). Duchamp reassembled the glass fragments during the summer of 1936 and the reconstituted panels were sandwiched between heavier panes of glass and mounted in the existing frame. Duchamp confessed to Sweeney, "there is more, almost an intention there, an extra – a curious intention that I am not responsible for, a readymade intention, in other words, that I respect and love." (*ib.* 1973:127). Duchamp went as far as to welcome the

cracking of the *Glass* both as a manifestation of chance as an aesthetic improvement. He remarked to Sweeney that the curvilinear patterns of “the two crackings are symmetrically arranged” (*ib.* 1973:127). Speaking of the breakage, Duchamp later remarked that the cracks “brought the work back into the world” (Steeffel 1977:22) and “it is true that the network of lines gives the work an air of physicality, if only because it serves to remind the viewer of the vulnerability of its prime matter” (Golding 1973:11).

One cannot help wondering to what extent the cracking of Duchamp’s works on glass were left to chance. His first such a work to crack was the *Nine Malic Moulds* of 1914-1915. According to the artist, the cracking occurred shortly after his arrival in New York on 15 June 1915, “I showed it to somebody and it was leaning against a rocking chair which rolled back [causing the work to break on the carpeted floor] so the splinters were not scattered at all.” (Schwarz 1969:632). Duchamp said, “The break [...] did not disturb the design” (d’Harnoncourt and McShine 1973:277). Then followed *To Be Looked at* of 1918, which was cracked immediately after being photographed, where it hung on the balcony of the Buenos Aires hotel room where Katherine Dreier was staying (Schwarz 1969:663). The only work on glass to have escaped cracking is the *Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighbouring Metals* of 1913-1915, but such an effect would surely spoil its perspectival design. The crackings of all of Duchamp’s works on glass were described as accidental, but were welcome. The *Carte Postale* sequence of Hans Richter’s *Dadascope*, which was shot at 327 East 58th Street on 12 November 1956, documents Duchamp managing, if not enjoying, to crack orthogonal sheets of glass with a hammer.

Knowing Duchamp to be a master art creator, the cracks of his works on glass, are unlikely to have been caused by chance, or, if they were accidental, they are embraced in this state as the result of his intended design. The fragility of glass serves as an ideal allegory of the vulnerability in human relations, even between an archetypal couple like Odysseus and Penelope. And maybe that is exactly what makes the *Glass* so current and appealing. The fact that the original is cracked makes it contemporary. The cracks allude to fissures in the edifice of civilisation, which are celebrated rather than mourned over. They suggest the end of pristineness, of great men (heroes) and of an elite affair of things... Similar cracks were caused and rejoiced by Joyce. Bending forward and peering at the mirror held out to him, Stephen said in bitterness, “It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant.” (Joyce 1934:1.8). Maybe it is further a symbol of all art that rises to the challenge of contemporaneity. Duchamp proved that the cracks could be celebrated, institutionalised, even worshipped...



Hans Richter
(Germany, 1888-1976).
Dadascope: Carte Postale, 1956-1961;
premiered 9 March 1965.
Film, 39:08.
Paris, FR: Centre Georges Pompidou.

Conclusion



Jonathan Santlofer
(USA, b. 1946).
*Portrait of Marcel Duchamp
and Rose Sélavy, 2000.*
Hydrocal, 9 x 9 x 2.
Private Collection.

alter ego fill the pictorial space, blocking visual access beyond the boundaries of the frame. Puzzlingly, Duchamp holds his index finger to his lips in a gesture of secrecy. Of course, he provided art history with access to hundreds of notes and plenty preliminary studies that preceded and accompanied the elaboration of the *Glass*, but their riddle-like ambiguity made its interpretation more difficult and thus excited the viewers' imagination even further. So many theories have been suggested as to what Duchamp meant with his *Glass*. Each and every one of them offers yet a different reading of this elusive work, all based on sound arguments and valid pieces of evidence. They jointly confirm the plurality of the *Glass*' readings.

Assuredly, Duchamp is the enigmatic Sphinx personified and his *Glass* is the lasting oracle. In his essay, *Marcel Duchamp, or The Castle of Purity* of 1970, Octavio Paz admitted that the *Glass* is "one of the most hermetic artworks of our century" (Paz 1978:29) and accepted the fact that it was designed as an insoluble enigma. Gough-Cooper and Caumont wrote, "[The *Glass*] will continue, like the Egyptian sphinx, to defy every kind of exegesis" (Gough-Cooper and Caumont 1999:22). Towards the close of his life, Duchamp remarked to Schwarz, "the minute you talk you spoil the whole game" (Schwarz 1987:19). He chose silence as a method of evading explanation and guarding the enigma. In Jonathan Santlofer's *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy*, the artist and his feminine



ICA EXHIBITION
You are invited to a press view at ICA East, 14 Wharf Rd N1

YOKO ONO *Odyssey of a Cockroach*

Wednesday 4 February 2004
12 - 2pm

Exhibition: 5 February - 7 March 12 - 7.30pm daily, Box Office: 020 7930 3647
Press contact: Roz Arratoon 020 7766 1404 roza@ica.org.uk



ICA

Yoko Ono
(Japan, b. 1933).
Odyssey of a Cockroach, 2004.
Recto and verso of invitation.
London, UK: Institute of
Contemporary Arts - ICA.

This study proposes yet another interpretation of Duchamp's *Glass*, adding only another facet to a multifaceted work. The proposed linkage of Duchamp's *Glass* with Homer's *Odyssey* comes, at first glance, as a shocking surprise. However, there are plenty of arguments that lead to this assumption. In lieu of factual evidence, this study analyses the creator's rationale, investigates his favourite literature, researches the trends in modern culture, explores its major works and examines every element of the *Glass*, with an aim to uncover possible connections to Homer. Stage by stage, this study paints a portrait of the *Glass* that connects to the *Odyssey* rather abstractly, peripherally and variously. Admittedly, this connection is slippery, because it is based on speculation. Its comparison with Joyce's *Ulysses*, a contemporary work whose source of appropriation was safe, helps to exemplify the oblique way by which to relate to the same epic. Hence came about the study's original title, "A Joycean Exegesis of *The Large Glass*".

The study also makes the point that *parthenogenesis* (virgin birth) is rather unlikely in cases of works radically breaking, yet continuing from an age old tradition. Homer keeps inspiring avant-garde artists, whose work develops along Duchamp's conceptual lines and ethos. Alarmed by the cruelty, cynicism and savageness that threaten to breakdown human ethic and values in the 21st century, Yoko Ono embarked on her project *Odyssey of a Cockroach* (2003-2004) to address these troubling issues. She explained, "I have decided to be a cockroach for a day and see what is happening in this city through its eyes. Since we can easily say that New York is the cultural centre of our society, I have taken various pictures of the city's corners and presented them from a cockroach's point of view. Through the eyes of this other strong race, we

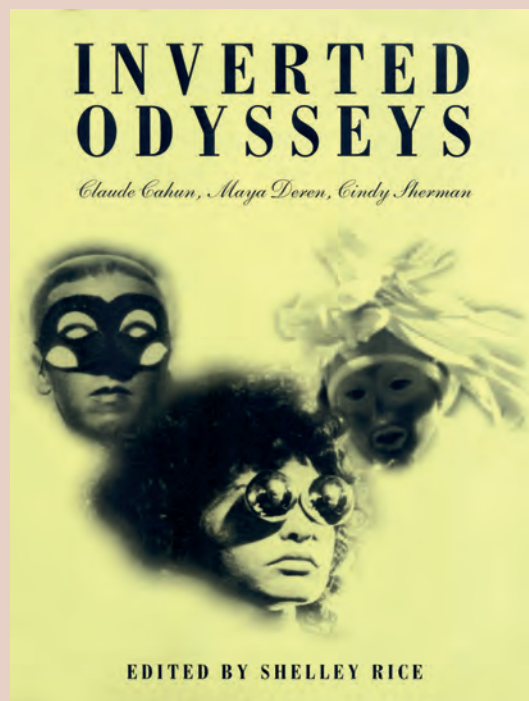
may learn the true reality of what our dreams and nightmares have created” (www.deitch.com). A groundbreaking visionary in contemporary art, Ono appropriated Homeric motifs, methods and structures for her manifesto-like description of the concepts, ideas and thoughts that went into this performed installation.

Moreover, this study places the *Glass* in a postmodern framework that is still concerned with new readings and extraordinary appropriations of Homer’s *Odyssey*. The *Inverted Odysseys* exhibition co-curated by Lynn Gumpert and Shelley Rice at the Grey Art Gallery, New York University, in 1999, featured works by Claude Cahun, Maya Deren and Cindy Sherman. The premise was that these Amazons of the avant-garde shared Odysseus’ obsession with masquerade, trying out different identities that shatter or expand the notion of a unified self. Their feminist viewpoint impelled the curators to title their exhibition with reference to the *Odyssey* in the plural and paired with the notion of ‘inversion’, a term used by sexologists, primarily as of the early 20th century, to refer to homosexuality.

Throughout this study an effort is made to highlight the progressive qualities that inspired the 20th century’s avant-garde to respect the *Odyssey* and appropriate it in their work in intelligent new ways. If the *Glass* falls in this body of work, then it certainly is the most amazing take on the Homeric epic, perhaps the equivalent of Joyce’s *Ulysses* in the visual arts. Here, then, lies the significance of this study – to demonstrate to its readers how fascinating appropriation can appear, how limitless references can become and how daring iconoclasm can be. This is why the academics advocating postmodern theory and multiculturalism need to reconsider Homer and embrace him as the generating force par excellence of timeless yet non-elitist values and archetypes and of the desirable notion of otherness. Hanson and Heath argued that Homer is topical as synonym for what they term “Greek Wisdom” – a commitment to open inquiry, self-criticism, anti-aristocratic thought, free expression, disinterested reason and science, immune from the edicts of general, priest and king (Hanson and Heath 1998:79).

Perhaps the solution to the *Glass*’ enigma is as vain as any attempt to locate the places in the *Odyssey*’s narrative on the world atlas. What matters, instead of solutions for chimerical problems, is to bear in mind the Cavafian exegesis of the *Odyssey*’s value as an enriching course over any notion of ultimate fulfilment – “Ithaca gave you the *marvellous journey*. / Without her you would not have set out. / She has nothing left to give you now” (Cavafy 1975:36). In this respect, just what is it that makes the *Glass* still so different, so appealing? The answer is its everlasting elusiveness. Whatever is certain about the *Glass* is only abstract. As Paz wittily suggested, “The divinity in whose honour Duchamp has raised this ambiguous monument is not the Bride or the Virgin or the Christian God but an invisible and possibly nonexistent being: the Idea.” (Paz 1978:74). Indeed, with his *Glass* Duchamp proved that the brain is the greatest erogenous zone and showed that the solutions to its enigma are the fruit of every viewer’s imagination. In conclusion, it can perhaps be said with earnestness that what matters above all is not whether the point at issue has been proven, but rather the train of thought that helped to get here. And by getting here, it is hoped that this thesis may entice its readers ever to do, undo and redo their own *Odysseys*.

On the aftermath of the *Glass*’ centenary, mainstream contemporary art has seemingly moved further away from Homer’s *Odyssey*, or so it appears. Actually, however, seminal works of world culture, like the *Odyssey*, *Ulysses* and the *Glass* are not about their specific protagonists, locations or details. They are works that convey a meaning other than and in addition to the literal. As such, they are about archetypal issues with which human nature grapples eternally – lust (see III.9), intoxication (see III.8) and violence (see III.12). These vices are incarnated in the Chimera, which Homer describes as “a thing of immortal make, not human, lion-fronted and snake behind, a goat in the middle and snorting out the breath of the terrible flame of bright fire” (*Iliad* 6.181-183). Further down he calls it “untameable”, causing “irreparable damage to a multitude of people” (*ib.* 16.328-329). From these descriptions it becomes apparent that the Chimera is an allegorical reference to human passions. The dangerous form of the Chimera determines the



Cover of Lynn Gumpert and Shelley Rice’s *Inverted Odysseys* exhibition catalogue (1999).

Anonymous (Etruria).
Chimera of Arezzo, c. 400 BC.
Bronze, 80 x 130 x 60.
Florence, IT: Museo Archeologico Nazionale.



three basic perceptions of the human soul that will evolve in the future into diseases of the body. The first head is of the sexually insatiable animal, the goat and symbolises the libidinal impulse of ruthless passions. The second head is of the poisonous effect, the snake and symbolises the suppression of concealed selfishness. The third head is of the animal king, the lion and symbolises the oppression of all other animals through power. In the imagination of the ancients, therefore, the enormous complex of the Chimera was created. In essence, it is the offspring of the Homeric triple passion, primarily for power, which is the subject of the tragic *Iliad*, secondarily for the wine and flesh dealt with by the comic *Odyssey*. These vices are echoed in the three temptations of Jesus in the Judaeian desert – ambition, gluttony and vanity. They are also ancestors of the triple sin mentioned in the “pretty girl / whiskey bar / little dollar” in the *Alabama Song* from Bertolt Brecht’s opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* of 1930, as well as in the title of Ian Dury’s song *Sex & Drugs & Rock ‘n’ Roll* of 1977. All these works then follow from Homer as morality stories, providing their audience or beholders with moral guidance through allegory. Professor Phanis J. Kakridis (1933-2019), one of the leading representatives of Greek Philology, was keen to endorse this prospect and said:

As poets and writers focus on man, Homer does so exemplarily, ideally and masterfully. His work is so multifaceted and comprehensive that everyone may find an aspect to unravel. Homer is a fountainhead. He says, come to quench your thirst! Your study claims that Homer exploits the epic narrative to refer obliquely to three timeless human passions – lust that makes people mad; intoxication that disorients them; raw power that makes them inhuman. Your theory suggests that in speaking about man Homer promotes moral allegorical parables like the Lord. Rather than evaluate your theory I would tell you that Homer endures. His work is like the Bible, like Dante. (Professor Kakridis in a telephone communication with the author on 30 August 2016).

The three vices that Homer stigmatises are constant threats that plague human existence from time immemorial. So, at least in this cryptic respect, such works as the *Glass* and *Ulysses* are bound to relate to one another as Homeric paradigms of man’s initiation to inner freedom, which Duchamp called the “beauty of indifference” (Sanouillet and Peterson 1973:30).

Detail from Man Ray's *Dust Breeding* (1920).

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Index

Note: Page references in italics indicate illustrations and their captions.

- #
- 3 (Three/Triad/Trinity), 14, 16, 18, 23, 25-27, 30, 32, 36, 43-46, 58, 60, 65-69, 76, 86-87, 91-92, 100, 105, 107, 109, 142-143-144-145, 147, 149, 154, 156, 161, 166, 171, 174-177, 180, 181, 183-184, 189-190, 195, 198-199, 201, 206
- A
- Achilles, 15, 26, 37, 47, 52, 59, 84, 99-100, 104, 131, 165
- Ades, Prof. Dawn, 61, 83, 110-111, 190, 193
- Aeneas, 100, 105-106, 128, 143
- Aggression (Rock'n'Roll), 16, 54, 68, 75, 100, 122, 195
- Anastasi, William, 70
- Anciens & Modernes, 41-42
- Androgyny, 35, 51
- Antiheroism, 58-60, 67-68, 79, 142, 202
- Apollinaire, Guillaume, 12, 19-20, 30, 36, 43, 48, 60, 85, 106, 137, 173, 189
- Apollodorus, 60, 70, 105, 119, 127
- Appropriation, 19, 23, 25, 34, 58, 62-63, 67, 92, 97, 99, 120, 122, 129, 134, 142-145, 170, 185, 204-205
- Archimedes, 20
- Archipenko, Alexander, 194
- Arctinus of Miletus, 51
- Arensberg, Louise & Walter, 66, 97, 109, 111, 115, 142, 178
- Aristonothos, the Painter, 79-80
- Aristophanes, 14, 20, 39-40, 59, 94
- Aristotle, 12, 37-38, 47, 65, 189, 206
- Ashton, Prof. Dore, 66
- Athena, 44, 50, 59, 60-61, 75, 82-84, 89, 98, 100, 105, 108, 112, 121, 128, 151, 155-156-157, 160, 168, 171, 181, 185-187, 192, 197, 202
- Attis, 50, 84, 100, 119
- Avant-Garde, 16, 19-20, 22, 25, 27, 29, 30, 43, 48-49, 53, 57, 60, 62-63, 69, 114, 122, 132, 142, 145, 167, 185, 194, 204-205
- Avedon, Richard, 80
- B
- Baju, Anatole, 172
- Balka, Mirosław, 118-119
- Barbarism, 34, 50, 54, 62, 77, 79, 100, 119, 134, 175, 179
- Barthes, Prof. Roland, 61, 174
- Bartholdi Frédéric-Auguste, 135
- Bartholomew, Edward-Sheffield, 75
- Baruchello, Gianfranco, 137-138
- Bataille, Georges, 134
- Baudelaire, Charles, 52-53, 172
- Beach, Sylvia, 64-64
- Beardsley, Aubrey, 25-26
- Bellows, George, 78
- Bénédictine, Liqueur, 147, 174-175
- Bérard, Victor, 152-153
- Bergson, Prof. Henri, 22, 106, 144, 162
- Bernhardt, Sarah, 85, 190
- Beuys, Joseph, 16
- Blass, Tatiana, 93
- Bloom, Prof. Harold, 62
- Bloom, Leopold, 20, 58-60, 62, 65, 67-69, 77, 79, 81, 85, 86, 88, 90, 104, 106, 110, 151, 153-154, 158, 163, 175-176, 184, 191, 199
- Bloom, Molly, 62-63, 65, 67-68, 70, 86, 88, 104, 158, 163, 176, 191, 200
- Böcklin, Arnold, 48, 125-126, 142
- Bohemianism, 81
- Bonnard, Pierre, 25, 114
- Bonnet Rouge, 100-101-102
- Borach, George, 67, 106
- Bouguereau, William-Adolphe, 49, 50, 75
- Bourdelle, Antoine, 48-49, 50, 162
- Bourgeoisie, 19, 21, 33, 57, 59, 81, 83, 85, 143, 174
- Bouveret, Philippe, 167
- Bradford, Ernle, 153
- Brancusi, Constantin, 16-17, 65-66
- Brassaï, 24
- Breton, André, 29, 32, 36, 51, 62, 65, 78, 92, 98, 115, 120, 123, 126, 135-137, 147, 154, 163, 183, 185, 194
- Brochard, Prof. Victor, 17
- Brooks, Donald L., 130
- Buchel, Charles A., 78
- Budgen, Frank, 67, 200
- Burne-Jones, Sir Edward, 127-128
- Butler, Prof. Eliza Marian, 19
- Butler, Samuel, 20, 60, 166
- Byars, James Lee, 135
- C
- Cabanne, Prof. Pierre, 14, 17, 30-31, 78, 81, 108, 144, 147, 187, 200
- Cacoyannis, Michael, 130-131
- Cage, John, 17, 57, 63, 70, 81, 174
- Calas, Nicolas, 136-137
- Calder, Alexander, 13
- Canova, Antonio, 94-95, 100
- Capablanca, José Raúl, 109
- Carpentier, Georges, 194
- Carracci, Annibale, 41

- Carrouges, Michel, 36, 147
 Cartesianism, 18, 144
 Cartier-Bresson, Henri, 200-201
 Cassandra, 100, 105, 127-128-130-131-132, 134-135, 137, 176, 188
 Catharsis, 35, 58
 Cavafy, Constantine P., 38, 142, 171, 205
 Cellini, Benvenuto, 121
 Cézanne, Paul, 69
 Chess, 30-31, 38, 65, 68, 103, 107-109, 115, 134, 159-160-161, 165
 Chevalier, Gil, 25-26
 Chimera, 111, 205-206
 Chirico, Giorgio de, 33-34, 48
 Circe, 20, 26, 47, 58, 60, 67, 85-86, 104, 153, 171, 175-176, 187, 202
 Clair, Prof. Jean, 56, 147, 179
 Clair, René, 193
 Classicism, 12, 16, 19-21, 32, 35, 37-38, 41, 43, 45-46, 48, 52-53, 55, 62, 76, 85, 86, 94, 98-99, 106, 108, 119-120, 124, 137-138, 142, 152-155, 165, 184-187, 206
 Cocteau, Jean, 29, 36
 Colonialism, 34, 93, 100
 Comedy, 13-14, 19, 23, 32-33, 43-44, 46-47, 57, 59, 62, 64, 68, 84, 96, 105, 115, 135, 143, 151, 202, 206
 Comte, Auguste, 38
 Comte de Lautréamont, 119-120, 130
 Conceptualism, 12, 16, 23, 29, 57-58, 61, 63-64, 77, 79, 109, 122, 135, 142, 147, 159, 178, 181, 195, 200, 204
 Copley, William, 67, 129-130, 133-134, 137, 201
 Corinth, Lovis, 50, 75-76, 136, 192
 Cornell, Joseph, 129, 131
 Courbet, Gustave, 79, 122, 169
 Cousteau, Jacques, 99
 Cras, Jean, 44
 Cubism, 19, 49, 69, 76, 107, 137, 194
 Cuckoldry, 28, 33, 52, 59, 67-68, 79, 86, 103-104
 Cudworth, Nick, 69
 Cunningham, Merce, 17, 57, 63, 70, 81
 Cyclops, Polyphemus, 19, 27, 33, 38, 41, 44-45-46, 50, 53-54, 58, 67-68, 76-80, 83, 119, 143, 153, 167, 179, 184, 186
- **D** —
 Dadaism, 22-23, 36, 56, 60, 64, 69, 76, 83, 115, 142-144, 165, 167, 185, 193-194, 203
 Dalí, Salvador, 39-40, 48, 51
 Dante Alighieri, 12-13, 19, 29, 38, 47, 57, 67, 74, 96, 105, 143, 153, 202, 206
 Darjou, Henri-Alfred, 43
 Daumier, Honoré, 37, 43, 49-50, 52, 82, 104
 De Man, Prof. Paul, 61
 Décimo, Prof. Marc, 12-13, 143
 Delay, 16-17, 87, 91-92, 124, 161-162, 176, 192
 Delvaux, Paul, 88
- Demos, Prof. T. J., 34, 93
 Denis, Maurice, 22, 49
 Derrida, Prof. Jacques, 62, 162, 200
 Descartes, René, 17-18, 38
 Desnos, Robert, 121
 Dickinson, Robert Latou, 166-167
 Diepenbeeck, Abraham van, 156
 Diotima, 13-14
 Dörpfeld, Dr Wilhelm, 153, 168
 Donovan, Frank P., 96
 Doucet, Jacques, 90
 Draper, Herbert, 175
 Dreier, Katherine S., 27, 115, 142, 194, 202-203
 Drunkenness, 22, 69, 78, 105, 111, 127, 171-173, 175, 181, 193
 Duchamp, Marcel
 3 *Standard Stoppages*, 17-18, 23, 144, 179, 199
 Air de Paris, 97
 Anagram for Pierre de Massot, 23-24
 Apropos of Little Sister, 65
 Belle Haleine, 43, 94, 96-97
 Bicycle Wheel, 15, 28
 Bilboquet, 113-114
 Blind Man, 22, 76-77, 110
 Bottle Rack, 103
 Box (Green), 15, 33, 62, 132, 144, 146, 162, 168, 177, 194, 200, 202
 Box (White), 146, 169, 196
 Box in a Suitcase, 144
 Box of 1914, 18
 Boxing Match, 146, 194-195-196
 Bush, 125
 Cast Shadows, 15, 22, 28
 Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries, 147, 152, 166
 Chess Game, 65
 Chocolate Grinder, 23-24, 62, 64, 147, 149, 177-178-179-180
 Comb, 66
 Compensation Portrait, 83, 85
 Disks Bearing Spirals, 22
 Door for Gradiva, 123, 125-126
 Draft Pistons, 68, 87-88, 144, 147, 152, 156, 158
 Étant donnés, 14, 35, 95, 123, 130, 132-133-134-135, 169, 183
 Fountain, 23, 56, 60, 76, 78, 110, 111
 Fresh Widow, 32, 81, 87-88, 92, 135
 Front Cover for "View", 173-174
 Glider containing a Water Mill, 170, 175, 203
 Guest + Host = Ghost, 66
 Hand Reflection, 134
 Hat Rack, 15, 28, 103-104
 His Twine, 92-93
 In Advance of the Broken Arm, 120
 Juggler-Handler-Tender of Gravity, 59-60, 65, 67, 144, 147, 194, 198-199
 Jura-Paris Road, 142
 L.H.O.O.Q., 85, 94
 Large Glass, 14, 16, 18, 22-24, 27-30, 33, 36, 39, 43-44, 48, 50, 55-65, 67-68, 70, 87, 92, 96, 103, 114, 126, 130, 132, 137, 142-144, 146-148-150-152, 154, 156-158-159, 162-164, 168-171, 174, 177-181, 183, 185-186, 188-190-191, 194-200, 202-203-206
 Monte Carlo Bond, 83
 Nine Malic Moulds, 23, 144, 146-148-149, 164-165-167, 203
 Nude Descending a Staircase, 65, 78, 194
 Nude with Dark Skin, 65
 Oculist Witnesses, 15, 16, 22, 144, 147, 149, 150, 158, 180, 183-185, 188-189, 194, 196
 Réveillon Menu, 173
 Rotary Glass Plates, 22
 Rose Sélavy, 12-14, 22-23, 31, 36, 57, 60, 81, 83-84-85, 87-89-90, 96-97, 117, 121, 163
 Sculpture for Travelling, 15
 Successive Drawing, 185
 The Bachelor Grinds His Chocolate Himself, 177
 Tiré à quatre épingles, 98, 102
 To Be Looked at, 22, 27, 188-189, 203
 Trap, 151
 Tum', 15, 22, 27-28, 79, 144
 Unhappy Readymade, 108
 Wanted: \$2,000 Reward, 83
 White Box, 18, 146, 169, 196
 Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?, 14, 115-117, 164
 Wilson-Lincoln Effect, 196-197
 Duchamp-Villon, Raymond, 37, 49, 54, 76, 106-107
- **E** —
 Ecclesiastes, 13
 Eco, Prof. Umberto, 57
 El Greco/Dominikos Theotokopoulos, 49-51, 105-106
 Eliot, T. S., 12, 19, 38, 43, 65, 85, 143
 Ellmann, Prof. Richard, 19, 58, 62-64, 66, 74, 106, 154, 200
 Elpenor, 19, 59, 78, 80, 171
 Éluard, Paul, 123
 Encyclopédie, 41
 Epeius of Phocis, 105, 108
 Eros (Love), 13-14, 23, 28, 70, 115, 135, 161, 169
 Eroticism, 14, 21, 40, 48, 51, 64, 85, 134, 147, 177, 183, 187, 200
 Eruli, Prof. Brunella, 25
 Escoffier, Auguste, 43, 96
 Euclid, 12, 22, 188
 Euripides, 20, 29, 47, 59, 94-95, 100, 129, 130-131, 134
 Eustathius of Thessalonica, 40, 118, 120
 Exekias, the Painter, 171
- **F** —
 Fabro, Luciano, 93
 Fallibilism, 17-18
 Fauré, Gabriel, 19, 44
 Fauvism, 55, 142
 Fell, Dr Jill, 25, 199
 Felson-Rubin, Prof. Nancy, 20, 84
 Feminism, 19, 20, 30, 43, 45, 50, 57-62, 84-87, 101, 121, 125, 132, 158, 176, 204-205
 Fisher, Dr Ben, 22, 25-28
 Flaxman, John, 81, 84, 91, 112, 124, 156-157, 192
 Fleming, Guy, 171
 Ford, Prof. Mark, 30, 32, 35, 36
 Foucault, Prof. Michel, 29, 31, 36
 France, Anatole, 19, 46
 Freud, Prof. Sigmund, 14, 123, 125, 166
 Freytag-Loringhoven, Else von, 166
 Frueh, Alfred J., 76-77
 Fuseli, Henry, 186
 Futurism, 69, 76, 100
- **G** —
 Galanis, Démétrius, 49-50, 53, 80
 Galilei, Galileo, 189-190
 Gardner, Prof. Percy, 155, 157
 Ghika, Nico Hadjikyriaco, 112
 Gilicze, Gergő, 79-80
 Glasheen, Adaline, 74
 Gleizes, Albert, 49, 78
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 19, 21, 38, 85, 94, 136
 Golding, Prof. John, 90, 116, 147, 178, 181, 202-203
 Gough-Cooper & Caumont, 12, 30, 44, 48, 78, 81, 109, 115-116, 125, 135-136, 194
 Gradiva, 62, 123, 125-126
 Graves, Prof. Robert, 100, 127-128, 188
 Greenberg, Prof. Clement, 63
 Gros, Antoine-Jean, 69, 101
- **H** —
 Händel, Georg Friedrich, 32, 35
 Hall, Prof. Edith, 40, 61, 82
 Hamilton, Richard, 15-16, 68-69, 104, 129, 143-144, 151, 158, 166, 174, 191
 Harnoncourt & McShine, 18, 87, 108, 115, 146, 151, 159, 166, 170, 203
 Harrison, Jane Ellen, 120
 Hatot, Georges, 44
 Head, Cloyd, 48, 142
 Hegel, Georg, 136, 145
 Helen, 20, 42-43-44, 47, 52, 60, 82, 94-95-96-97, 100, 104-105, 128, 130-131
 Henderson, Linda, 22, 24, 56, 144, 147, 154, 159, 169, 189, 202
 Heroism, 12, 37, 57-60, 89, 95, 99, 107, 165, 172, 203
 Hess, Thomas, 16
 Hesse, Eva, 17, 170
 Hessel, Steve, 133
 Hodes, Barnet, 130
 Hölderlin, Friedrich, 19, 136
 Holt, Benjamin, 106, 107
 Homer, 12, 15-16, 19, 20-25, 29, 32-38-39-44, 46-47, 50-64, 67-69, 74-75-76-77-81, 84-85, 89, 92, 94, 96, 98, 104, 108-109, 112-114, 116-120, 124-125, 128-129, 134, 137-138, 142-143, 145, 148-149, 152-158, 160, 164-166, 168-172, 175-179, 183, 185, 187, 197, 204-206
Iliad, 37, 40-42, 47, 52, 57-59, 62-63, 84, 94, 99, 102, 104-105, 108, 118, 129-130, 137, 143, 195, 205-206
Odyssey, 12-13, 15, 18-26-29, 32-35, 37, 40-41, 43, 45-47, 50, 53-64, 67-68, 77-79-80-81-82, 84, 86-87-91, 94, 98-99, 101, 104-105-108, 110-112-113, 115-118, 120, 124-125-126, 128-129, 137, 142-143, 145, 149-153-156-157-158, 160-161-166, 168-173, 175-176, 178, 181-183, 185, 187, 190-192-194, 199, 202, 204-206
 Homoeroticism, 13
 Homosexuality, 35-36, 60, 118, 205
 Hopkins, Prof. David, 60, 143, 147, 162, 200
 Horkheimer & Adorno, 151, 175
 Hughes, Dr Bettany, 95
 Hultén, Pontus, 179
 Humour/Joke, 17, 24, 28, 32, 43, 59, 61-62, 67, 90, 96, 101, 137, 149, 164, 174, 183, 200
- **I** —
 Iconoclasm, 12, 21, 22, 40, 50, 67, 69, 102, 120, 133, 142, 146, 148, 154, 205
 Idealism, 28, 41, 59, 68
 Indifference, 16-17, 56-57, 90, 201, 206
 Individualism, 14, 34, 40, 47, 51, 53, 81
 Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique, 38, 42, 46-47, 52, 185
 Instantaneism, 194
 Intoxication (Drugs), 21, 25, 97, 132, 171-172, 195, 205-206
 Irony, 21, 23, 25-26, 35, 38, 40, 49, 52, 57, 61-62, 64, 67, 82, 90, 111, 118, 120, 128-129, 131, 134, 137, 145, 147-148, 151, 154, 160, 174, 181, 198, 200-201
 Irrationalism, 32, 56, 58, 62
 Irus, 32, 150, 171, 192-193
- **J** —
 Jameson, Prof. Frederic, 58-59
 Janet, Dr Pierre, 29, 34-36
 Janis & Janis, 62, 92, 144, 153
 Jarry, Alfred, 12, 15, 22-24-26-28, 41, 43, 56, 107, 114, 143-145, 181, 199-200
 Jensen, Wilhelm, 123
 Jesuitism, 12, 41
 Johns, Jasper, 17, 57
 Jones, Prof. Amelia, 56-57, 59-60, 62-63, 165
 Jones, Dr Peter, 161, 165, 182, 199
 Jong, Prof. Irene de, 58
 Joyce, James, 12, 19-20, 28, 38, 55, 58, 60, 62-65-66-69-70, 74, 77, 85-86
Finnegan's Wake, 64, 66, 129
Ulysses, 28, 46, 50, 55, 57-59, 61-65, 67-69-70, 74, 77-79, 81, 85, 88, 104, 106, 111, 117, 124, 129, 142-144, 150, 153-154, 156, 158, 163-164, 171, 176, 178, 184, 191, 199-200, 204-206

Jung, Dr Carl Gustav, 14, 189

—K

Kakridis, Prof. Johannes Th., 57, 153
Kakridis, Prof. Phanis J., 206
Kalon (Beauty), 13-14, 135
Katz, A. H., 113
Katz, Prof. Marylin A., 67, 142, 161
Kazantzakis, Nikos, 101, 143, 145
Kiesler, Frederick, 31, 198
Kleophrades, the Painter, 128, 132
Kleos (Glory), 142, 165, 172
Knight (Chess), 30, 103, 107-109, 165
Koons, Jeff, 169
Kramer, Hilton, 64
Krauss, Prof. Rosalind, 56
Kuyper, Eric de, 176, 178

—L

Lascaux, the Cave, 185
Le Bargy & Calmettes, 45
Le Grand, Alexandre, 174
Lebel, Robert, 13, 65, 78, 98, 147, 173, 183, 187, 189
Léger, Fernand, 76
Lennon, John, 201
Lequeu, Jean-Jacques, 133, 170
Lévy, Julien, 83
LeWitt, Sol, 108
Lord Byron, George Gordon, 94
Lust (Sex), 142, 149, 160, 164, 176, 178-179, 187, 194, 205-206
Lycophron of Chalcis, 137

—M

Magi, Prof. Paola, 13
Magritte, René, 123, 125, 164
Man Ray, 36, 65-66, 78, 83, 85, 87, 94, 95-96-97, 120, 132-133, 162-163, 170, 183, 207
Marlowe, Christopher, 25, 94
Martins, Maria, 132
Masquerade, 59, 61, 69, 102, 109, 205
Massot, Pierre de, 23-24, 102
Matisse, Henri, 49, 50, 53, 55, 76-77
Matisse, Paul, 13, 55, 129, 147, 160, 195, 198, 201
Matisse, Pierre, 55
Matisse-Monnier, Jacqueline, 109
Matriarchy, 20, 60, 89
McHale, Prof. Brian, 58-59, 63
McManus & Mooney, 154
Melanitis, Yiannis, 127
Melanthis, 81, 91, 171
Méliès, Georges, 45, 46
Messerschmidt, Franz Xaver, 116
Metcalf, James, 129-130
Metzinger, Jean, 49-50, 78
Michelakis, Dr Pantelis, 45
Milton, John, 67, 74
Mimesis, 83, 85, 122
Mithras, 100-101
Mnesterophonia (Slaughter of Suitors), 157, 182
Modernism, 19-22, 25, 34, 36-38, 41-44, 46-49, 52-54, 56-57, 59, 62-65, 67-6976, 85-86, 92, 99, 101, 106, 119-120, 128, 132, 136-137, 142-143, 145, 152-153, 168, 176, 182-183, 189, 191, 193-194, 199,

202, 204

Moillon, Isaac, 111
Morain, André, 80
Moreau, Gustave, 42, 47-50-51, 53, 55, 94, 96, 142, 182
Multiculturalism, 20, 205
Murray, Prof. Gilbert, 134

—N

Nabokov, Vladimir, 154
Naumann, Dr Francis, 13, 35, 97, 109, 113-114, 125, 144
Naumann & Bailey, 30-31
Naumann & Bailey & Shahade, 107, 109, 144, 165
Naumann & Obalk, 36, 107, 109
Nekyia (Necromancy), 43, 118, 164, 187
Nelson & Bayliss, 132-133
Neoclassicism, 41, 46, 52, 85, 94, 99-101, 185
Newton, Sir Isaac, 162, 168
Nicéron, Jean-François, 189, 196
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 59
Norton, Louise, 98, 110
Novillo-Corvalán, Dr Patricia, 75
Nugent, Prof. Joseph, 153-154

—O

Odysseus, 20, 25-26-29, 32-33-34, 37, 39, 41-44-45-46-47-48-50, 52, 54-55, 58-62, 67-68, 77-79-80-81-82-84, 86-91, 98-99, 101-102, 104-105, 108-110, 112-114, 116, 118-122, 124-125-126, 128, 137, 142-143, 149-156-157-158, 160-166, 168-172, 175-178-179, 181-182-183, 185-187, 189, 190, 192, 197, 199, 202, 203, 205
Offenbach, Jacques, 43, 96-97
Ogilby, John, 156
Ono, Yoko, 201, 204
Orlan, 122
Orphism, 19, 164

—P

Pach, Walter, 53, 65, 178
Pacifism, 19, 58, 60, 130
Paris, 42, 44, 60, 94, 96, 98-100, 102, 127-128, 137
Parody, 13, 21, 32, 43, 52, 58-59, 61, 63, 67-68, 76, 81, 95-96, 102, 134, 191, 192
Pascal, Blaise, 13
Pataphysics, 18, 22, 24-28, 36, 43, 145, 199
Patriarchy, 20, 85, 102, 118
Paz, Octavio, 17, 22, 30, 56, 129, 147, 204
Penelope, 19-20, 28, 32, 35, 42, 44-49-50, 52, 58-60, 62-63, 67-69, 80-81, 83-87-84, 86-91-94, 98-99, 104, 113, 116-117, 119, 124-125-126, 135, 137, 142-143, 148-149, 151, 156-157-159-161-162-166, 171-172, 176, 181, 184, 197, 199-200, 202-203
Penis/Phallus, 23-24, 28, 45, 62, 68, 101-102-103, 113-114, 118, 119, 120, 122, 128, 132, 149, 151, 166-167, 170, 178, 180, 183-184
Philosophia (Love of Wisdom),

12-18, 23, 36, 37-38, 41-42, 48, 58, 63, 86, 108, 135, 143, 147, 151, 162, 177, 183, 189, 199
Picabia, Francis, 14, 30, 34, 44, 49, 51, 53, 70, 83, 85, 87, 137, 143-144, 187, 188, 194
Picabia, Gabrielle, 30, 44, 49, 98
Picasso, Pablo, 49-50, 109, 185, 195
Pitman, Joanna, 85, 96
Plato, 12-17, 22-23, 27-28, 47, 62, 68, 135, 164
Pleiades, the Constellation, 150, 190-191
Poe, Edgar Allan, 53, 173, 175
Polemos (War), 129
Polizzotti, Dr Mark, 34, 135-136
Pollock, Prof. Griselda, 61
Popper, Sir Karl, 157
Positivism, 22, 38
Postmodernism, 56-64, 68-69, 74, 94, 178-179, 205
Pound, Ezra, 19, 38, 65-66, 85
Priapus, 24, 98, 100-102
Primaticcio, Francesco, 41, 182
Pyrrho of Elis, 17-18, 23, 38
Pythagoras of Samos, 143

—Q

Quatremère de Quincy, 100
Quinn, John, 53, 65

—R

Rabat, Prof. Jean-Michel, 132-133
Ramírez, Prof. Juan Antonio, 148, 195
Rapin, René, 41
Rationalism, 18, 38, 41, 150
Rauschenberg, Robert, 17, 57, 63, 81
Readymade, 14-16, 18, 22-23, 25, 28, 31-32, 58, 63, 81, 85, 87, 90, 97-98, 102-103, 108, 110, 114-115, 120, 162, 179, 202
Redon, Odillon, 37, 49, 50, 53
Régnier, Henri de, 25, 27
Rembrandt van Rijn, 22, 49-50, 69, 74
Rengakos, Prof. Antonios, 60-61
Reynal, Jeanne, 122
Reynolds, Mary, 66, 132, 168
Richter, Hans, 34, 63, 76, 83, 103-104, 109, 116, 144, 164-165, 203
Rigaud, Jean-Baptiste, 97
Rimbaud, Arthur, 171
Roché, Henri-Pierre, 29, 76, 78, 110-111, 115, 190-191
Roche-grosse, Georges-Antoine, 42, 47-48
Rodin, Auguste, 27, 37-38, 49-50, 54, 64, 79-80, 124-125
Roth & Katz, 56-57, 62
Rouault, Georges, 50-51
Roussel, Raymond, 13, 29-30-33-36, 49, 63, 66-67, 94, 115-116, 129, 143, 188
Ruether, Prof. Rosemary Radford, 60

—S

S. Teddy D., 184
Saint Phalle, Niki de, 186, 190
Sainte-Geneviève, la Bibliothèque, 17, 65, 189, 196

Samain, Albert, 44, 50, 53, 79-80
Sanouillet & Peterson, 13, 17, 18, 22, 30, 36, 59, 62-64, 67-68, 79, 81, 88, 90, 92, 107, 121, 144, 147, 150-151, 154, 160, 162, 166, 169, 174, 178, 189, 198, 202, 206
Santlofer, Jonathan, 204
Satie, Eric, 16, 67, 69-70, 193
Satire, 22, 37, 43, 46, 52, 82, 129
Sattler, Alexina (Teeny), 13, 55, 78, 94, 129, 132, 136, 200-201
Saussure, Prof. Ferdinand de, 162
Scepticism, 12, 16-18, 23, 56, 59, 79, 117
Schaidenreißer, Simon, 181
Schiaparelli, Elsa, 92
Schliemann, Dr Heinrich, 42-43, 95-96, 172
Schwarz, Arturo, 17, 23, 28, 56, 98, 103, 110, 126, 132, 138, 144, 146-147, 160, 177-178, 185, 198-200, 202-204
Serre, Jeanne, 125
Sexualism, 13-14, 19-20, 24, 28, 35-36, 45, 48, 57, 59-60, 63, 67-68, 70, 85-86, 88, 97, 101, 103-104, 113-114, 118, 123-127, 131-135, 147-148, 151, 154, 159, 163, 166-167, 169-173, 175-177, 188, 200, 202, 205-206
Shakespeare, William, 12, 29, 38, 47, 67, 82, 85, 117, 121, 128
Shere, Charles, 174
Silence, 16, 89-90, 122, 124, 160, 199, 204
Sirens, the Painter, 25-26
Sirens, 25-26, 42, 50, 58, 60, 68, 153, 175
Skouphos (Cap), 99-100-101
Société Anonyme, 120, 142, 179, 194, 202
Socrates, 13-17, 23, 47, 135, 199
Sophocles, 20, 47, 59
Steeffel, Dr Lawrence D., 66, 154, 203
Stein, Gertrude, 66, 174
Stieglitz, Alfred, 110
Stirner, Max, 34, 81
Stournaras, Nick S., 136
Strick, Joseph, 77, 85, 104, 158, 176, 191
Subjectivism, 21, 33, 53, 56, 58, 61, 68, 144
Sutorship, 20, 33, 35, 42, 46-47, 49-51, 59, 60, 67-68, 80, 82-84, 87, 89, 91, 93-94, 104, 116, 118-119, 137, 142-143, 148-150, 155, 156-157, 160-161, 164-165-166, 169, 171-172, 176, 181-182, 184, 192, 199, 201-202
Suquet, Jean, 152, 154, 199, 201
Surrealism, 19, 24, 31-34, 36, 48, 51, 60, 62, 64, 79, 85, 92, 115, 120-124, 132, 136-137, 183, 185, 194, 198
Sweeney, Dr James Johnson, 30, 51, 63, 79, 88, 195, 202-203
Symbolism, 17, 22, 23, 38, 48-51, 53, 66, 79, 92, 101-104, 119, 121, 137, 162, 171-172, 175, 189, 191, 206

—T

Taylor, Prof. Michael R., 22, 24, 28, 67, 129-130, 132-133, 168-169
Telemachus, 20, 43-44, 47, 52, 58, 68, 80, 84, 89, 91, 99, 116, 119, 129, 143, 153, 156, 160-161, 165, 171, 172, 181, 182-183, 202
Thanatos (Death), 28, 135
Tibaldi, Pellegrino, 41
Tiepolo, Giandomenico, 108
Tilson, Joe, 200
Tinguely, Jean, 17, 63, 68, 167, 179, 184, 186
Tinguely & Luginbühl, 184
Tiresias, 19, 35, 43, 60, 70, 78, 84, 118-119, 120, 150, 187-191, 202
Tischbein, Johann Heinrich Wilhelm, 99-100
Tomkins, Calvin, 18, 44, 56, 63, 65, 70, 107, 130, 173, 201
Tragedy, 25, 33, 46, 48, 51-52, 59, 62, 64, 67, 94, 96, 128-130, 206
Transvestism, 20, 32, 35, 67-68, 81, 84-85, 94
Tzetzes, Ioannes, 136

—U

Ulysses (see Joyce)

—V

Valaoritis, Prof. Nanos, 29, 32, 58, 61, 129, 134, 136-137, 143, 157, 192
Varèse, Edgard, 98
Vasari, Giorgio, 97
Veber, Jean, 112
Vesalius, Andreas, 148-149-150
Villon, Jacques, 45, 53, 78, 107, 137
Vinchon, Dr Jean, 189
Violence (Raw Power), 25, 27, 35, 60, 62, 116, 131, 133-134, 142, 157-158, 161, 165, 172, 182, 192, 194-195, 205-206
Virgil, 12, 19, 47, 57, 67, 74, 105-106, 108, 120, 143
Vogel, Douglas, 98
Volta, Ornella, 67

—W

Walcott, Sir Derek, 74-75
Warburg, Prof. Aby, 20
Waterhouse, John William, 166
Williams, William Carlos, 66, 166
Wise Bauer, Dr Susan, 12
Wolkenberg, Alfred, 109
Wood, Beatrice, 76, 110
Wooden Horse (Doureios Hippios), 51, 105-108-109, 128-129, 151, 172
Wormer & Davis, 175

—X

Xenophon, 155

—Y

Yang Xiong, 180
Yes (Nai/Oui), 30, 36, 68, 137, 199-200-201

—Z

Zambaco, Maria, 127-128
Zeus, 44, 62, 70, 76, 84, 94, 100, 127-128, 156, 182, 191

L A

M A N N E E

M I S E A N U

P A R S E S

C E L B A N N E S

M E N E

Dr Megakles Rogakos' exegesis of the "Glass" is an impressive intellectual creation, enriched with the practices of decipherment and the art of writing, but at the same time created by the experiences and exhaustive study of culture from Homer to Duchamp and of the cosmos from the cave paintings of Lascaux to the constellation of the Pleiades.



Dr Eleftherios Anevlavis
Translator in Greek of Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Wake*

