SURREALIST *Women*

AN INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY

Edited with Introductions by

Penelope Rosemont

Surrealist Women: An International Anthology

THE SURREALIST REVOLUTION SERIES
Franklin Rosemont, Editor

A renowned current in poetry and the arts, surrealism has also influenced psychoanalysis, anthropology, critical theory, politics, humor, popular culture, and everyday life. Illuminating its diversity and actuality, the Surrealist Revolution Series focuses on translations of original writings by participants in the international surrealist movement and on critical studies of unexamined aspects of its development.

Surrealist Women

AN INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY

Edited with Introductions by
Penelope Rosemont

The Athlone Press London

First published in Great Britain 1998 by
THE ATHLONE PRESS
1 Park Drive, London NW11 7SG

© The University of Texas Press 1998

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBN 0 485 30088 5

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Every effort has been made to trace any copyright owners for the works reproduced herein. The University of Texas Press will be happy to hear from any who may hold copyrights whom we found impossible to contact.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

To my mother, Mamie Krekule

Each part of Nature
accords with the whole of it.

—Spinoza

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

List of Illustrations xxi

Acknowledgments xxiii

INTRODUCTION: All My Names Know Your Leap: Surrealist Women and Their Challenge xxix

Notes on Individuals Frequently Cited in This Anthology lix

1. The First Women Surrealists, 1924–1929

INTRODUCTION: The Women of *La Révolution surréaliste* 3

Renée Gauthier

Dream: I Am in a Field . . . 14

Simone Kahn

Surrealist Text: This Took Place in the Springtime . . . 17
The Exquisite Corpses 18

Denise Lévy

Surrealist Text: I Went into a Green Song . . . 20
Surrealist Text: Ivory Blue and Shady Satin . . . 21

Nancy Cunard

Surrealist Manifestation at the Diaghilev Ballet 22
The Beginnings of the Surrealist Revolution 23
Surrealism, Ethnography, and Revolution 26

Nadja
The Blue Wind 29

Fanny Beznos
I Go, the Wind Pushing Me Along 31
Purity! Purity! Purity! 32

Suzanne Muzard
On Love: Reply to an Inquiry 33
My Passage in Surrealism 34

Valentine Penrose
When It Comes to Love: Response to an Inquiry 36

Suzanne Muzard, Elsie Houston, and Jeannette Ducrocq Tanguy
Surrealist Games 37

2. In the Service of Revolution, 1930–1939

INTRODUCTION: Women and Surrealism in the Thirties 41

Claude Cahun
Captive Balloon 52
The Invisible Adventure 53
Poetry Keeps Its Secret 53
Surrealism and Working-Class Emancipation 57
From life I still expect that overwhelming experience 58
Beware Domestic Objects! 59

Nancy Cunard
How Come, White Man? 63
The Scottsboro Case 64
A Trip to Harlem 65

Simone Yoyotte
Pale Blue Line in a Forced Episode 67
Half-Season 67

Greta Knutson
Foreign Land 68

Lise Deharme
The Empty Cage 70
The Little Girl of the Black Forest 70

Denise Bellon, Gala Dalí, Nusch Eluard, Yolande Oliviero
Experimental Research: On the Irrational Knowledge of the Object: The Crystal Ball of the Seers 70

Maruja Mallo
Surrealism as Manifest in My Work 72

Meret Oppenheim
Where Is the Wagon Going? 74
If You Say the Right Word, I Can Sing . . . 75
Anyone That Sees Her White Fingers . . . 76

Jacqueline Lamba
A Revolutionary Approach to Life and the World 77

Gisèle Prassinos
Arrogant Hair 78
The Ghost of Chateaubriand 78

Toyen
A Community of Ethical Views 81

Alice Rahon
Four Poems from *On the Bare Ground* 82
Despair 83
Hourglass Lying Down 84

Valentine Penrose
There Is the Fire 85
The Datura the Serpent 85
To a Woman to a Path 86

Sheila Legge
I Have Done My Best For You 89

Eileen Agar
Am I a Surrealist? 91

Mary Low
Women and the Spanish Revolution 94

Marcelle Ferry
You Came down from the Mountains . . . 99
When He Went Away . . . 100
The One Seated on the Stones of Cheops . . . 100
Frenzy, Sweet Little Child, You Sleep . . . 101

Leonora Carrington
The Sand Camel 103

Grace Pailthorpe
What We Put in Prison 106
The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism 107
Surrealist Art 111
On the Importance of Fantasy Life 111

Hélène Vanel
Poetry and Dance 112

Ithell Colquhoun
What Do I Need to Paint a Picture? 114

Jeanne Megnen
The Noise Will Start Tomorrow 115

3. *Neither Your War nor Your Peace:*
THE SURREALIST INTERNATIONAL, 1940–1945

INTRODUCTION: Women in the Surrealist Diaspora: First Principles and New Beginnings 119

Suzanne Césaire
André Breton, Poet 127
Discontent of a Civilization 129
1943: Surrealism and Us 133
The Domain of the Marvelous 137

Mary Low
Perchance to Dream 137
Women and Love through Private Property 139

Frida Kahlo
I Paint My Own Reality 145
From Her Journal 145

Lucie Thésée
Beautiful as . . . 146
The Buckets in My Head . . . 147
Where Will the Earth Fall? 148

Leonora Carrington
Down Below 150

Régine Raufast
Photography and Image 154

Laurence Iché
Scissors Strokes by the Clock . . . 156
I Prefer Your Uneasiness Like a Dark Lantern . . . 157
Unpublished Correspondence 157
The Philosophers' Stone 158

Gertrude Pape
The Lake 160
Eardrops from Babylon 160

Susy Hare
Complaint for a Sorcerer 162

Sonia Sekula
Womb 164

Meret Oppenheim
Round the World with the Rumpus God . . . 165

Ithell Colquhoun
"Everything Found on Land Is Found in the Sea" 168
Water-Stone of the Wise 170

Emmy Bridgwater
On the Line 172
Back to the First Bar 173
The Journey 173
The Birds 174

Edith Rimmington
The Growth at the Break 176
The Sea-Gull 177

Alice Rahon
Pointed Out Like the Stars . . . 178
Little Epidermis 178
Sublimated Mercury 179
The Appellants 180
Ferns in a Hollow of Absence . . . 180
The Sleeping Woman 181

Eva Sulzer
Butterfly Dreams 182
Amerindian Art 183

Jacqueline Johnson
The Paintings of Alice Rahon Paalen 185
The Earth 187

Ida Kar
I Chose Photography 190

Ikbal El Alailly
Introduction to *Vertu de l'Allemagne* [The Virtue of Germany] 192

4. Surrealism versus the Cold War, 1946–1959

INTRODUCTION: Regroupment and Occultation: Women in the Surrealist Underground in the 1950s 199

Thérèse Renaud
I Lay My Head 207

Françoise Sullivan
Dance and Automatism 208

Irène Hamoir
Pearl 211
Aria 212
The Procession 212

Emmy Bridgwater, Ithell Colquhoun, Irène Hamoir, and Edith Rimmington
Surrealist Inquiry: What Do You Hate Most? 213

Lise Deharme
I Didn't Know Gertrude Stein 215

Maria Martins
I Am the Tropical Night's High Noon 216
Art, Liberation, and Peace 217

Helen Phillips
The Image: Recognition of a Moment 218

Vera Hérold
The Big L 219

Gisèle Prassinos
Peppermint Tower in Praise of Greedy Little Girls 220

Ithell Colquhoun
The Mantic Stain: Surrealism and Automatism 220

Dorothea Tanning
Legend 225

Nora Mitrani
Scandal with a Secret Face 227
"Blacker Than Black . . ." 230
About Cats and Magnolias 230
Poetry, Freedom of Being 233
On Slaves, Suffragettes, and the Whip 233
Concupiscence and Scandal: Definitions from the *Succinct Lexicon of Eroticism* 236

Valentine Penrose
I Dream 236
Beautiful or Ugly It Doesn't Matter 238

Jacqueline Johnson
Taking a Sight 1951 238

Alice Rahon
Painter and Magician 242

Jacqueline Senard
Reason and Safety Factors 243
Cat = Clover 246
Polar 248

Elisa Breton
One in the Other 250

Elisa Breton, Anne Seghers, and Toyen
Surrealist Inquiry: Would You Open the Door? 250

Joyce Mansour
Into the Red Velvet 253
Lovely Monster 253
Practical Advice for Waiting 254
To Come, Possession, Prick Tease: Definitions from the *Succinct Lexicon of Eroticism* 255

Meret Oppenheim
Automatism at a Crossroads 256
I Have to Write Down the Black Words 257

Judit Reigl
Points of Departure for a New Revolt 257

Isabel Meyrelles
Night Words 259

Anneliese Hager
Of the Poison of Dreams 261
The Blue Spell 262
Automatic Dream 263

Drahomira Vandas
Light Throws Shadows 264
An Egg Hatches Out a Flame 264
Rain Man 265

Olga Orozco
Twilight (Between Dog and Wolf) 266

Blanca Varela
Dance Card 267

Marianne van Hirtum
In Those Rooms . . . 268
Abandon, Meeting, Orgasm, Seduce, Vice: Definitions from the *Succinct Lexicon of Eroticism* 270

Leonora Carrington
Comments on *The Temptation of St. Anthony* 271
On Magic Art: A Conversation, 1996 272

Kay Sage
Painter and Writer 275
An Observation 275
The Window 275
Chinoiserie 275
Fragrance 275

Mimi Parent
Depraved Person, License, Masturbation, Voyeur: Definitions from the *Succinct Lexicon of Eroticism* 278

Sonia Sekula
Notes from a Journal: The Occurrence of Meeting a Face Contra a Face 278

Remedios Varo
A Recipe: How to Produce Erotic Dreams 280

5. The Making of "May '68" and Its Sequels

INTRODUCTION: Women in the Surrealist Resurgence of the 1960s and 1970s 285

Nora Mitrani
In Defense of Surrealism 294

Nelly Kaplan
Memoirs of a Lady Sheet Diviner 295
At the Women Warriors' Table 298
Enough or Still More 299
All Creation Is Androgynous: An Interview 300

Nicole Espagnol
Female Socket 304
Heartstopping 304
The Conclusion Is Not Drawn 305
The Wind Turns 305

Annie Le Brun
Introduction to *Drop Everything!* 306

Giovanna
Where Are We in Relation to Surrealism? 309
Baking Chocolate and Dialectics 310
What Do I Know . . . 311
Therapy 312

Monique Charbonel
It's a Wonder 313

Unica Zürn
Lying in Ambush 314

Elisabeth Lenk
Surrealism: A Liberating and Catalyzing Element in Germany Today 317
Automatic Text for Anne Ethuin 318

Penelope Rosemont
Passage 320
Candle 321
Rising Asleep 321

Joyce Mansour
A Mango 323
Night in the Shape of a Bison 323
Ten to One to No 324
Wild Glee from Elsewhere 325
Absolute Divergence: The International Surrealist Exhibition, 1965–1966 326

Mimi Parent
Are You a Surrealist? 327

Marianne van Hirtum
The Future of Surrealism: Response to an Inquiry 329
While We Spend Our Lives Ironing . . . 330
And I Shall Be the Mouth of Copper . . . 331
The Naked Truth 332
Vampiro Nox 332
Surrealism: Rising Sign 333

Anne Ethuin
Legend 335

Isabel Meyrelles
I Will Tell You During the Walk . . . 337
Tyger, Tyger 338

Luiza Neto Jorge
Another Genealogy 340
"Monument to Birds" (Max Ernst) 341
Fable 341
The Force of Gravity 342
Sphericity: Ferocity 342

Alejandra Pizarnik
Caroline von Günderode 343
In a Copy of *Les Chants de Maldoror* 343

Leila Ferraz
Secrets of Surrealist Magic Art 344
My Love, I Speak to You of a Love 345

Rikki Ducornet
My Special Madness 347
Necromancy 347
Dark Star, Black Star 348
Machete 349
Clean 349

Nancy Joyce Peters
To the Death of Mirrors 351
General Strike 352
Nelly Kaplan's *Néa:* Woman and Eroticism in Film 352

Alice Farley
Notes toward a Surrealist Dance 357

Jayne Cortez
Consultation 359
Feathers 360
In the Line of Duty 360
Make Ifa 361
Say It 362

Haifa Zangana
Can We Disturb These Living Coffins? 364
A Symbol of Sin and Evil Thoughts: Introduction to Ibn Hazm Al-Andalusi 366

Hilary Booth
Their Games and Ours: A Note on Time-Travelers' Potlatch 368

Hilary Booth, Nancy Joyce Peters, Penelope Rosemont, Debra Taub
Surrealist Games: Time-Travelers' Potlatch 369

Valentine Penrose
From These Husks Are Worlds Made 371

Leonora Carrington
What Is a Woman? 372
The Cabbage Is a Rose 375

Meret Oppenheim
Nobody Will Give You Freedom, You Have to Take It 377

6. Surrealism: A Challenge to the Twenty-First Century

INTRODUCTION: Women and Surrealism Today and Tomorrow 383

Silvia Grénier
Salomé 394
Signs 395

Carmen Bruna
Poetry: An Incitement to Revolt 397
"Lady from Shanghai" 398
Moi-Même (Myself) 399

Eva Švankmajerová
Emancipation Cycle 400
Tactile Lids 401
Stunned by Freedom 401
I Don't Know Exactly 403

Alena Nádvorníková
Emila Medková's Photographs and the Anthropomorphization of Detail 404
Determination of Time 407
Art History (Sandro Botticelli) 407

Ivana Ciglinová
The Old Crow's Story 408

Mary Low
The Companion 409
Q.E.D. 409
Where the Wolf Sings 410
Encounter 411

Hilary Booth
Long Hot Summer: Great Black Music Today 411
Preface to *I Am Rain* 412
Our Skin Is Paper 413
Poem for Central America 414

Marie-Dominique Massoni
Two Seconds 415
How Old Is the Old Mole? 415

Haifa Zangana
What Choice? 416

Jayne Cortez
When I Look at Wifredo Lam's Paintings 419
Bumblebee, You Saw Big Mama 420
Sacred Trees 422

Penelope Rosemont
Life and Times of the Golden Goose 425
The Bad Days Will End 427
Revolution by Chance 427

Rikki Ducornet
The Volatilized Ceiling of Baron Munodi 430
Manifesto in Voices 436

Alice Farley
Permutations of Desire 438
Costumes: Vehicles of Transformation 438
Gesture 439

Irene Plazewska
Newton's Descent 440

Debra Taub
A Dance in the Forest 441
Exquisite Alchemy 442
Secret Melodies 442

Gina Litherland
Imagination and Wilderness 443

Ivanir de Oliveira
Collage: Image of Revelation 445

Nicole E. Reiss
Divagations 447
A Delirious Voyage inside a Circle 447

Elaine Parra
To Radicalize with Beauty and Love 448

Sarah Metcalf
A Game of Slight Disturbances 450

Katerina Piňosová
The Piece of Bone 453

Lenka Valachová
The Sterile Dish 455

Kajsa Bergh
Desire 456

Petra Mandal
First-Hand Knowledge 457

Nancy Joyce Peters
Women and Surrealism 459

Bibliography 471

Index 505

Illustrations

xxv Toyen, *At a Certain Hour,* oil with collage, 1963.

xxviii Mimi Parent, *Come,* 1978. Courtesy of the artist.

1 Cover of *La Révolution surréaliste,* nos. 9–10, 1 October 1927.

2 Nadja, ink drawing, ca. 1926.

39 Cover of *Le Surréalisme ASDLR* no. 5, 15 May 1933.

40 Toyen, ink drawing, 1937.

57 Claude Cahun, *Coronation Carriage,* ca. 1938.

92 Eileen Agar, *Teacher and Pupil,* ink drawing, 1979.

97 Mary Low, *Mermaid,* collage, 1994.

104 Leonora Carrington, *Dog, come here into the dark house. Come here, black dog,* etching, 1995.

110 Grace Pailthorpe, *The Speckled Thrush,* oil on canvas, 1936.

117 Cover of *Tropiques,* no. 3, October 1941.

118 Meret Oppenheim, *Paradise Is Under the Ground,* collage & gouache, 1940.

160 Gertrude Pape, *Be Sure,* collage, early 1940s.

163 Susy Hare, drawing, 1943.

165 Sonia Sekula, drawing, 1943.

166 "Surrealist Inquiry on Mythological Creatures," from *VVV* No. 2–3, 1943.

175 Emmy Bridgwater, *Daybreak*, collage, 1975.

177 Edith Rimmington, *The Onlooker*, date unknown.

179 Alice Rahon, drawing, ca. 1944.

197 Contents page of *Médium* no. 1, November 1953.

198 Maria Martins, sculpture, ca. 1947.

237 Valentine Penrose, collage, 1951.

249 Elisa Breton, *Object*, 1950s.

262 Anneliese Hager, *Mystery of Nature*, 1948.

269 Marianne van Hirtum, ink drawing, 1983.

277 Mimi Parent, *Eve Dreams*, 1973.

281 Remedios Varo, *Solar Music*, oil on masonite, 1955.

283 Title page of the *Catalog of the World Surrealist Exhibition*, 1976.

284 Giovanna, drawing made on a typewriter, 1967.

322 Penelope Rosemont, *Euclid's Last Stand*, oil on canvas with collage, 1976.

328 Mimi Parent, drawing, 1984.

336 Anne Ethuin, *The Tables of the Law*, coated collage, 1976.

348 Rikki Ducornet, *Black Isis*, etching, 1991.

365 Haifa Zangana, *Destruction of a Map*, collage, 1978.

381 Cover of *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion*, 1989.

382 Eva Švankmajerová, *Over All*, oil, 1988.

402 Eva Švankmajerová, *Ascendancy*, oil, 1984.

405 Alena Nádvorníková, *What Is Above Is also Below*, ink, 1989.

406 Emila Medková, *The Cut*, 1965.

454 Katerina Piňosová, ink drawing, 1966.

458 Petra Mandal, ink drawing, 1989.

465 Marie Wilson, ink drawing, n.d.

466 Aube Elléouët, *The Engulfed Cathedral*, collage, 1996.

Acknowledgments

Naturally my greatest debt is to the surrealist women whose writings and artwork make up this book, and most especially to those who—through correspondence and discussion—graciously provided me with information regarding their own and other women's participation in the Surrealist Movement: Eileen Agar, Hilary Booth, Elisa Breton, Emmy Bridgwater, Carmen Bruna, Leonora Carrington, Susanna Coggeshall (Susy Hare), Jayne Cortez, Rikki Ducornet, Aube Elléouët, Nicole Espagnol, Anne Ethuin, Alice Farley, Silvia Grénier, Marianne van Hirtum, Nelly Kaplan, Elisabeth Lenk, Mary Low, Joyce Mansour, Alena Nádvorníková, Ivanir de Oliveira, Mimi Parent, Elaine Parra, Nancy Joyce Peters, Katerina Piňosová, Nicole E. Reiss, Thérèse Renaud, Françoise Sullivan, Eva Švankmajerová, Toyen, Marie Wilson, and Haifa Zangana.

What I owe to André Breton can hardly be summed up in a few words, but I hope my gratitude will be evident throughout this book. His inspiration and thoughtful encouragement were decisive factors in shaping my life.

Special thanks to Rikki Ducornet, Guy Flandre, Edouard Jaguer, Mary Low, Michael Löwy, Conroy Maddox, Nancy Joyce Peters, Katerina Piňosová, Myrna Bell Rochester and my husband, Franklin Rosemont, all of whom supplied me with so much information and helped in so many other ways that they could almost be considered coeditors of this anthology.

Thanks to Richard Anders and Heribert Becker, for information on surrealism in Germany; Elisa Breton, for information on the contents of Nadja's letters in her possession; Carmen Bruna, for background on surrealism in Argentina; Leonora Carrington, for her recollections of Jacqueline Lamba and Remedios Varo; Eugenio Castro, J. F. Aranda, and Luis Garcia-Abrines, for material on surrealism in Spain; Her de Vries, for his biographical sketch of Gertrude Pape; Elie-Charles Flamand, Edouard Jaguer, Gérard Legrand, and

Michel Zimbacca, for their recollections of Jacqueline Senard and the proposed journal, *La Mante surréaliste,* in the early 1950s; Guy Flandre, for details on Elisa Breton, Marianne van Hirtum, and Toyen; David Gascoyne, for sharing his memories of Sheila Legge; Enrique Gomez-Correa, for information on the history of surrealism in Chile; Bruno Jacobs, for details on surrealism past and present in Sweden; Edouard Jaguer, for data on Anneliese Hager, Vera Hérold, Maruja Mallo, Jeanne Megnen, Drahomira Vandas, Hélène Vanel, and many others; Ted Joans, for interesting anecdotes about Elisa Breton and Joyce Mansour; Abdul Kader El Janabi, for data on Ikbal El Alailly and surrealism in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world; Susanna Coggeshall, Gerome Kamrowski, Philip Lamantia, and Clarence John Laughlin, for their recollections of surrealism in New York in the 1940s; Edith Smith, for her reminiscences of surrealist activity in Paris in 1948–1949; Sergio Lima, for details of the history of surrealism in Brazil (especially on Leila Ferraz and Maria Martins) and elsewhere in South America; Mary Low, for her reminiscences of Marcelle Ferry; Conroy Maddox, for a mass of information on surrealism in England from the 1930s on; Isabel Meyrelles, Mario Cesariny, and Artur do Cruzeiro Seixas, for information on surrealism in Portugal; Pierre Naville, for his recollections of Renée Gauthier and of surrealist interest in jazz in the 1920s; Henri Pastoureau, for data on Fanny Beznos, Vera Hérold, Simone Yoyotte and the *Légitime Défense* group, and Hélène Vanel; Katerina Piňosová, for information on women in surrealism in the Czech Republic; Antonia Rasicovici, for her letters on women in surrealism in Romania in the 1930s and '40s; Thérèse Renaud and Françoise Sullivan, for information on the automatist movement of Montreal; Gérard Rosenthal, for his recollections of Renée Gauthier; André Thirion, for responding at length to my queries about Simone Kahn, Denise Lévy, and Yolande Oliviero; Nanos Valaoritis, for details on surrealism in Greece; and Marie Wilson, for her reminiscences of Elisa Breton and surrealism in Paris in the early 1950s.

I am deeply grateful to Jayne Cortez, Guy Ducornet, Rikki Ducornet, Paul Garon, Michael Löwy, Nancy Joyce Peters, Myrna Bell Rochester, and my husband Franklin, for reading and commenting on various drafts of the introductions.

Several historians and other scholars generously made their work-in-progress available to me. Thanks to Nancy Deffebach, for sharing her important research on Alice Rahon; Hugh Ford, for information on Nancy Cunard; Daniel Guèrin, for his reminiscences of Simone Kahn Collinet; Libby Ginway, for details on Elsie Houston; Renée Riese Hubert, for details on Valentine Penrose, Alice Rahon and others; Michel Remy, for information on surrealism in England in the 1930s and '40s; Myrna Bell Rochester, for sending helpful

Toyen, *At a Certain Hour,* oil with collage, 1963. Photograph by J. Hyde, Paris. Courtesy of M. Guy Flandre and Maitre Louis Labadie.

articles and bibliographies, and for interviewing Dominique Desanti about her early interest in surrealism; Marie-Agnès Sourieau, for details on Suzanne Césaire and Lucie Thésée; Michael Stone-Richards, for documents on the early history of surrealism in Czechoslovakia; and Dale Tomich, for data on the *Légitime Défense* and *L'Etudiant noir* groups in 1930s Paris, and on the 1940s *Tropiques* group in Martinique.

Thanks also to Russell Maylone, Special Collections, Northwestern University Library; Christine Crowther, The Swiss Institute, New York; Eumie Imm Stroukoff, The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York; Cathy Henderson, Harry Ransom Humanities Center, University of Texas at Austin; Carey E. McDougall, Mattatuck Museum in Woodbury, Connecticut; and to the staffs of the Ryerson Library, The Art Institute of Chicago (which houses the important Mary Reynolds Collection), the Chicago Public Library, the University of Illinois Library in Urbana, and the Columbia University Oral History Project in New York.

To all the translators whose efforts appear in these pages, and especially those who did work specifically for this anthology—Gisela Baumhauer, Rachel Blackwell, Her de Vries, Guy Ducornet, Rikki Ducornet, Erin Gibson, Walter Gruen, Miriam Hansen, Natalie Kenvin, Nicole Knight, Jean R. Longland, Katerina Piňosová, Myrna Bell Rochester, Franklin Rosemont, Eloise Ryder, and Greta Wenziger—my warmest appreciation.

Many others contributed to this book in various ways, by facilitating communication with authors or their estates, passing on bits of information, answering questions, checking facts, and other acts of kindness. I am grateful to all of them. They include Gertrude Abercrombie, Branko Aleksič, Paul De Angelis, Enrico Baj, Mary Beach, Robert Benayoun, Jean Benoit, Rita Bischof, Vane Bor, Micheline and Vincent Bounoure, Paul and Mari Jo Buhle, Nicolas Calas, Jean-Claude Charbonel, Vèvè Clark, Tristan DeHarme, M. G. Devise, Eva Effenbergerová, Marcel Fliess (Galerie 1900–2000), Charles Henri Ford, Mrs. Simon Fraser, Laura Fronty, Paul and Beth Garon, Virginia Goldstein, Mel Gooding, Giovanna and Jean-Michel Goutier, Amparo and E. F. Granell, Walter Gruen, Jean-Pierre Guillon, Tom Gutt, Miriam Hansen, Jeremy Jenkinson, Alain Joubert, Konrad Klapheck, Djordje Kostič, Geoffrey Lawson, Dick Leutscher, Jean-Luc Majouret, Man Ray, Samir Mansour, Herbert Marcuse, Floriano Martins, Fabrice Maze, George Melly, John S. Monagan, Lygia and Gellu Naum, Guillermo de Osma, Euzhan Palecy, Antony Penrose, Dominique Rabourdin, David R. Roediger, Sylvie Sator, Georges Sebbag, Natalia Fernández Segarra, Louise Simons, Catherine Vasseur, Veronica Volkow, Susan Ware, ruth weiss, Pablo Weisz-Carrington, and Francis Wright.

At various stages of this project, indispensable technical assistance was

provided by Paul Garon, Lisa Oppenheim, Constance Rosemont, Sally Kaye Rosemont, and Joel Williams: *Merci beaucoup!*

And finally, thanks to Ali Hossaini Jr., Sharon Casteel, Leslie Doyle Tingle, Madeleine Williams, Zora Molitor, and Laura Young Bost at the University of Texas Press, for their many good suggestions and great patience.

Mimi Parent, *Come*, 1978. Courtesy of the artist.

INTRODUCTION

All My Names Know Your Leap

Surrealist Women and Their Challenge

Knock hard. Life is deaf.
—Mimi Parent

Although the first women of surrealism have been almost entirely overlooked in the historical and critical literature, clearly they were a bold, imaginative, and remarkable lot. Even before surrealism's first *Manifesto* appeared in Paris in 1924, women were active in the movement, and they have been expanding and illuminating its universe ever since.[1] In all the arts and major genres of writing, women helped develop surrealism's radical poetic/critical outlook and thus helped make it what it was and is. To ignore their contributions is to ignore some of the best of surrealism.

This book seeks to bring to light as much as possible the quality, range, diversity, and vitality of women participants in the international Surrealist Movement. Although the contributions of women have been acknowledged and in some cases celebrated within the movement itself, they are hardly known outside it. In the United States, the few books devoted to the topic of women and surrealism are narrowly concerned with a dozen or so "stars"—mostly painters and photographers whose work has finally, and most often posthumously, attained some standing in the art market.[2] As a result, women surrealists whose principal vehicle of expression is the written word have been especially neglected. This neglect, in turn, has perpetuated old stereotypes and other misapprehensions of the surrealist project. Generalizations about surrealism based entirely on painters are bound to be misleading, because surrealism has never been primarily a movement of painters. Indeed, if the evidence of surrealism's numerous women poets and thinkers has been suppressed, how could the prevailing conceptions of surrealism be anything but false?

I hope that this gathering of poems, automatic texts, dreams, tales, theoretical articles, declarations, polemics, games, and responses to inquiries will help correct this distortion by revealing some of the many ways in which

women have enriched surrealism as a ferment of ideas, an imaginative stimulus, a liberating critical force, and a practical inspiration to poetic, moral, and political insurgency.

Unlike most twentieth-century cultural and political currents, the Surrealist Movement has always opposed overt as well as *de facto* segregation along racial, ethnic, or gender lines. From the very first issue of *La Révolution surréaliste,* movement publications have featured writings by women alongside those of their male comrades. Works by women artists were regularly included in surrealist exhibitions. As one perceptive commentator has pointed out, "No comparable movement outside specifically feminist organizations has had such a high proportion of active women participants" (Short 1980, 56).[3] Moreover, until very recently most of the literature on women surrealists was written by other surrealists, male and female. If these women remain little known to the larger reading public it is because critics and scholars have been shirking their responsibilities.

Rebelling against the exclusion of women from patriarchal institutions, including art and the recounting of intellectual history, the women's liberation movement of the sixties and early seventies stimulated wider interest in the women of surrealism.[4] More recently, in the absence of mass-based radical social movements and in keeping with the rightward trend in U.S. and international politics, the focus on individual women artists has sometimes taken a conservative or reactionary turn. Certain critics and curators have attempted to isolate women surrealists from the Surrealist Movement as a whole, not only by reducing their work to the traditional aesthetic frameworks that surrealists have always resisted but worse yet by relegating them to a subbasement of the art world known as "Women's Art." Ironically, the old (mostly male) critics who ignored or minimized women in their studies of surrealism are not that different from these newer (often female) critics who ignore or minimize surrealism itself in their studies of women who took part in it. Each of these one-sided and erroneous views reinforces the other, and both prop up the insidious fiction that surrealism is yet another "Men Only" movement. Those who perpetuate such misunderstandings are missing much of what is most unique and momentous in surrealism.

Women who never renounced their youthful commitment to surrealist egalitarianism—Meret Oppenheim, Toyen, Anne Ethuin, and others—have strongly opposed this tendency toward segregation and have expressly refused to take part in books or exhibitions that sanction it. As Ethuin has written, declining to contribute to one such "No Men Allowed" collection, "I'm sorry, but not being a Moslem I have no taste for harems. Moreover, I have never thought

that art and poetry could have a sex. On days when I feel the urge to write or create images, I do not decide before I begin that I am going to make 'a woman's work.' I have lived and worked for forty-seven years in a perfectly mixed milieu and I have no intention of changing now."[5]

The orientation of the present anthology has nothing in common with the divisive agendas that Ethuin rejects. My aim here has not been to separate the sexes or to exclude men, but rather to include more women than have ever been included before in an anthology of surrealism. The fact is, apart from the rare anthologies issued by the surrealists themselves, women have almost always been left out.[6] Well over two-thirds of the women included here have never been represented in any anthology; many of these writings have never been reprinted since their original publication. In all but a few of the hundreds of works on surrealism in English, women surrealists are barely even mentioned.[7] The exclusion of women from the existing compilations warrants—indeed, compels, if only for the sake of historical accuracy—an attempt to restore balance by emphasizing what so many others have denied.

It is essential, moreover, that the recovery of surrealism's lost voices not do violence to the ideas and inspirations that motivated them. Unfortunately, the few books that do acknowledge, to some extent, women's activity in surrealism tend to be less than scrupulous in their accounts of surrealism as a body of thought and an organized movement. My intention in putting together this mass of heretofore inaccessible material has not been to project fashionable new theories, much less to subject the recent literature on surrealism to a detailed critique, but simply to try to learn what the many women involved in surrealism have had to say for themselves.

What is different about this anthology is that here, for the first time, an unprecedentedly large number of surrealist women are allowed to speak *in their own voices* and in a specifically surrealist context—which is, after all, the context they chose for themselves. This anthology is thus the opposite of isolationist, for its guiding purpose is rather one of *reintegration*. By making these writings available at last, I hope to make it impossible—or at least inexcusable—for students of surrealism to continue to ignore them. I want first of all to call attention to an impressive number of important surrealist writers who for various reasons have not received the attention they deserve. The fact that they happen to be women helps explain why they have been ignored outside the movement, just as it also affects what surrealism has meant to them. I try to show not only what they took from surrealism but also what they gave to it; how they developed it, used it for their own purposes, played with it, strengthened it, and endowed it with a universality it could not have attained without them.

This anthology is arranged chronologically in six sections, covering (1) surrealism's beginnings as an organized movement, 1924–1929; (2) its rapid internationalization, 1930–1939; (3) its further internationalization, despite severe handicaps, during World War II, 1940–1945; (4) its postwar regroupment and survival as a radical "underground" during the Cold War, 1946–1959; (5) its worldwide resurgence, starting in the early 1960s; and (6) surrealism today. Each section includes a short introduction tracing the history of surrealism in that period, focused on the evolving role of women in the movement. Each individual represented in the book is in turn introduced by a brief biobibliographical headnote.

With this general introduction, I first attempt to provide some necessary background, beginning with a summary of surrealism's basic aspirations and principles—a summary which I hope will help clear up widespread misperceptions. Next, I set forth the criteria used in preparing this anthology, explaining who is included in it and why, as well as why others have not been included. A survey of surrealism's precursors—concentrating on women, who as usual have been slighted in the critical literature—is followed by a brief examination of the sexual politics of the first, largely male generation of surrealists in Paris in the 1920s. Finally, after considering some of the many ways in which the recovery of surrealism's lost voices profoundly challenges the "conventional wisdom" about surrealism—especially in the United States, where uncomprehending hostility to the movement has been entrenched for so long[8]—I conclude with some observations on the contemporary significance of these writings.

SURREALISM: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

> Can one explain the magic of life to someone who cannot perceive it in the smallest everyday things?
>
> —Rosa Luxemburg

All through this book women speak of surrealism in vibrant images: as natural process, great bear skin, voyage, tightrope of our hope, potlatch, and festival. Surrealism has never let itself be locked up in the dungeons of narrow definition. It has neither dogma nor catechism. Before one can grasp what is at stake in surrealism, one must first perceive that the many cages in which journalists, critics, and its other enemies keep trying to confine it are in fact empty and that surrealism is elsewhere.

To start at the beginning, with what is perhaps the single most common

misperception, surrealism most emphatically does *not* signify unreality, or a denial of the real, or a "refusal to accept reality." It insists, rather, on *more* reality, a higher reality. Heirs to a profoundly radical poetic countertradition that includes the French-language writers Lautréamont, Alfred Jarry, and Jacques Vaché (none of whom, by the way, were widely read in the early 1920s), surrealists were also among the first in France to welcome the liberating significance of Freud's theories. These two distinct inspirations—poetry and psychoanalytic theory—came together when André Breton and his comrades (several of them medical students, as he was) attempted to draw conclusions from their revelatory experiences with automatic writing and hypnotic trance-speaking, experiences that called established notions of "reality" into question.

Surrealism begins with the recognition that the real (the *real* real, one might say, as opposed to the fragmented, one-dimensional pseudo-real upheld by narrow realisms and rationalisms) includes many diverse elements that are ordinarily repressed or suppressed in exploitative, inegalitarian societies. Based on the dialectical resolution of the contradiction between conscious and unconscious, surrealism indicates a higher, open, and dynamic consciousness, from which no aspect of the real is rejected. Far from being a form of irrationalist escapism, surrealism is an immeasurably expanded awareness.[9]

The social diffusion of this radical awareness is what the first surrealists called the surrealist revolution (which was also the title they gave their journal, *La Révolution surréaliste*). Their chosen method for its realization was the affirmation of the Marvelous—the production of disquietingly antirational images that disrupt positivist and other restrictive ways of thinking and being, thereby provoking all who behold them to come to grips with their own "inner reality" and its relation to the external world.

Affirmation of the Marvelous, which is also the negation of all that rationalizes misery, is the key to all forms of surrealist research, also known as the "practice of poetry." For surrealists, poetry is always discovery, risk, revelation, adventure, an activity of the mind, a method of knowledge leading to revolutionary solutions to the fundamental problems of life. Poetry is therefore the opposite of "literature"—a term which, in surrealist discourse, signifies a benumbing distraction that serves only the needs of repression and conformity. "It is not the technique of painting that is surrealist," as Joyce Mansour points out, "it's the painter, and the painter's vision of life."[10] Surrealists have always been hostile to literary and artistic values—so-called technical mastery, rules of versification, talent, good taste, aesthetic merit, and all the rest—because they regard such values as part and parcel of the institutions of unfreedom. Similarly, they have always rejected what they consider to be the militaris-

tic label "avant-garde," which critics like to apply to every cultural novelty. Surrealism is an impassioned revolt against all these deadening secondhand notions—an insurrection of the imaginary to overthrow all limitations imposed on the real. As the "integral liberation of poetry," surrealism is also the integral liberation of life (Breton 1970, 127).

This surrealist revolution was at first viewed by the surrealists themselves in nonpolitical terms, as a revolution of the spirit or mind. It took the first Surrealist Group only a few months, however, to perceive the limits of its original idealist premises. Politicized by the 1925 uprising of the Riff tribespeople in Morocco, surrealists began to see that surrealism's revolution requires the revolutionary (and material) transformation of society as a whole. Their early passion for Berkeley and Fichte led to a deeper study of Hegel and eventually to Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky. The surrealists' approach to Marxism, however, was always at odds with prevailing orthodoxies. Their reading of Hegel and Marx was close in many ways to that of some of the Frankfurt School theorists (Marcuse, Adorno), and they had a lot in common with such other maverick Marxists as Walter Benjamin, Raya Dunayevskaya, and C. L. R. James.[11]

By boldly identifying themselves with the cause of working-class self-emancipation, the surrealists demonstrated their utter scorn for capitalism's cultural elitism. They also avoided the trap of "mysticism," another means by which poets are converted into innocuous comforters of the existing order. Surrealism's atheistic and materialist conception of poetry vigorously rejects the consolations of organized religion—that "impoverished magic," as Joyce Mansour called it—whose ideologies it regards as inherently authoritarian and imagination-stifling (Breton 1991, 310).

By freeing "the practice of poetry" from the confines of literature, religion, and other forms of idealism—that is, from society's received ideas and other debris of the past—surrealism restored to poetry the prophetic voice that most of those who called themselves poets had long since renounced in favor of artifice, mystification, and other literary vanities. All that surrealists have done in poetry and the arts can be seen as a prophetic warning in regard to what Breton called the "extreme precariousness" of the human condition and at the same time an incitement to do something about it.[12] In a nutshell, the surrealist argument goes like this: If civilization persists on its disastrous path—denying dreams, degrading language, shackling love, destroying nature, perpetuating racism, glorifying authoritarian institutions (family, church, state, patriarchy, military, the so-called free market), and reducing all that exists to the status of disposable commodities—then surely devastation is in store not only for us but for all life on this planet. Effective ways out of the

dilemma, however, are accessible to all, and they are poetry, freedom, love, and revolution.

Following Spinoza and the poets, via Freud, the basic principle of surrealism's revolutionary ethic is *desire.* Opposed to all that reinforces what Herbert Marcuse termed the Performance Principle—the dominant historical form of the Reality Principle—surrealism is the expansion of life's possibilities in the service of the Pleasure Principle (Marcuse 1962, 32).[13] Freeing the imagination is the heart of the process by which everyday life becomes the realization of poetry itself. To effect this liberation, to overcome the repressive apparatus of logic, common sense, faith, law, bureaucracy, obedience to authority, militarism, and all closed systems, surrealism has always proceeded by "multiplying the ways of reaching the most profound levels of the mental personality" (Breton 1978, 149). The surrealist revolution draws freely on the most powerful elixirs in desire's laboratory: mad love, psychic automatism, analogy, chance, humor, play, games, and all forms of free association.

From its first day surrealism as an organized movement was itself a free association. A lot of nonsense has been written by crotchety critics about its splits and "purges," and especially about Breton's so-called "authoritarianism." Interestingly, such charges have virtually never been made by those who split, or who are supposed to have been "purged." Indeed, the best refutation of the myth of surrealist "authoritarianism" is to be found in the reminiscences of former surrealists who broke with the movement, sometimes bitterly. Nearly all of them, including the few who remained adversaries of the movement throughout their later years, convey unmistakably in their memoirs that surrealism as they lived it and as they left it was fundamentally a free community which practiced collective decision making and encouraged the active participation of all.[14] One would be hard pressed to name any radical current of our time that concerned itself more with the mutually conditioning effects of means and ends, individual and collective, the personal and the political.

Few poets have demanded so much of poetry—or of themselves. The intensity of the surrealist life, its extremism and "fanaticism," seems to have disoriented many critics, who prefer poets and artists to be more easygoing and manipulable. Those who fail to recognize the primacy of revolt in surrealism will never grasp what the whole adventure is all about. Precisely because surrealism is playful, poetic, free-spirited—in love with love, dreams, and the Marvelous, and rich in extravagant antirationality and the most outrageous humor—its support for revolt and revolution has always been unequivocally serious, "as serious as pleasure," as Jacques Rigaut once said.

WHO IS A SURREALIST AND WHO IS NOT? AND WHO CARES?

> Over and over again, names, mottoes, watchwords have been turned inside out, and upside down, and hindside before, and sideways, by occurrences out of the control of those who used the expressions in their proper sense; and still, those who sturdily held their ground, and insisted on being heard, have in the end found that the period of misunderstanding and prejudice has been but the prelude to wider inquiry and understanding.
>
> —Voltairine de Cleyre

While compiling this book I consulted a vast number of surrealist journals, exhibition catalogs, and other publications. Whenever I came across the name of a woman, I noted it on a file card. According to these cards, some three hundred women—at one time or another, to one degree or another—have taken part in the international Surrealist Movement. This book includes texts by ninety-seven of them. How did I decide whom to include? This raises more basic questions: Who is a surrealist? Who is not? And who is to say who is and who is not a surrealist?

Neither silly nor simple, these questions are vital for anyone who wants to know the truth about surrealism. Critics who attempt to define the movement in aesthetic or literary terms, as a "style" or a "school," overlook the crucial fact that surrealism is above all "a community of ethical views," as Toyen put it in a statement included in this collection. In the mass media incomprehension of surrealism goes even further. Especially since the 1950s the word has suffered constant misuse at the hands of journalists and others who specialize in devaluing language. The term *surrealism* is nearly always applied by news columnists and TV commentators in ways that have nothing to do with its original meaning. Just as *anarchism* long ago came to be equated with "bombthrowing" and *communism* with Stalinism, *surrealism* has been drained of its significance by being tossed around as a synonym for the fantastic and bizarre.

No one expects these terms to be used correctly by the ideological enemies of the "isms" the words represent. But those who want to understand these movements and the ideas behind them must try to comprehend what their proponents mean by them. For these and many other reasons, I have preferred to hold to rigorous criteria when selecting texts. To do less, it seems to me, would be intellectually dishonest and would make the present book pointless.

Many are the writers who at some point in the course of their careers have expressed themselves *in a surrealist voice*—to cite only a few examples: the Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector, the Cuban folklorist Lydia Cabrera, the African American writer Zora Neale Hurston, the Argentine poet Maria

Meleck Vivanco, the English poet Mina Loy, the French-born U.S. eroticist Anaïs Nin, and the German-born U.S. Beat poet ruth weiss are all important writers who in varying degrees have manifested real affinities with surrealism. But that is not the same as actually *participating in the surrealist movement*. Because these writers did not, for whatever reasons, identify themselves with surrealism as a collective effort, and did not take part in surrealism as an organized activity, their work is not included in these pages.

In other words, the accent in this anthology is on *active participation in surrealism as a collective adventure*. All the women included here have been co-thinkers and co-dreamers in surrealism's revolutionary project. More precisely, for the purposes of this collection, I define a surrealist as one who

(1) considers herself/himself a surrealist and/or

(2) is recognized as surrealist by surrealists and accepts being so designated, and

(3) takes part in surrealist activity by

  (a) producing work recognized by surrealists as a contribution to surrealism;

  (b) collaborating on surrealist periodicals;

  (c) participating in surrealist exhibitions;

  (d) publishing under the movement's "Surrealist Editions" imprint;

  (e) cosigning surrealist tracts;

  (f) taking part in Surrealist Group meetings, games, demonstrations, or other activities; and/or

  (g) otherwise publicly identifying herself/himself with the aims, principles, and activity of the Surrealist Movement.

All of the women represented here meet one or both of the first two requirements, and at least two of the requirements listed under item three. Of the more than three hundred women who have participated in the Surrealist Movement, writers have been a minority. I have tried to include important texts by as many women as possible, from as many countries as possible. I have selected texts that seem to me to best reflect each woman's specific contributions to surrealism: as poets, storytellers, theorists, or polemicists. Naturally, those who have been most prolific as writers, who have been active in the

movement over a long period, and whose influence on it is most evident are better represented than those whose participation was fleeting and less productive. But I have also included writings by many who simply "passed through" surrealism at one moment or another in their lives. Some of these "shooting stars" made contributions to the movement out of proportion to the brevity of their participation in it.

SURREALISM'S PRECURSORS: MALE AND FEMALE

> There are few books, which I can read through, without feeling insulted as a woman. . . .
>
> —Lydia Maria Child

A survey of the recognized precursors of surrealism shows that the very origins of the movement owe much to the inspiration of women. By precursors I mean poets, artists, and thinkers recognized by surrealists (not necessarily by critics) as having prefigured one or more aspects of surrealism. Most of the better-known precursors were male. Although few would qualify as feminists, it is interesting that many of them expressed what nineteenth-century spokespersons for women's emancipation called "advanced" views on the matter. Thus, Irish Gothic novelist Charles Robert Maturin, whose *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) influenced the poet Lautréamont and is often cited by surrealists, sometimes sounds like an echo of Mary Wollstonecraft: "Where woman is degraded, man is a brute. . . . If we make [women] slaves, we are slaves ourselves—we may bind them with chains, but the 'iron enters into our own soul'" (Maturin 1819, 182). In 1871, when the French literary establishment relegated women to the kitchen of "light verse," sixteen-year-old Arthur Rimbaud boldly proclaimed: "When the infinite servitude of woman shall have ended, when she will be able to live by and for herself . . . she too will be a poet. Woman will discover the unknown. . . . She will discover strange, unfathomable things, repulsive, delicious" (Rimbaud 1957, xxxii–xxxiii).

Nineteenth-century French social reformer Charles Fourier was regarded by Breton as one of the movement's major forerunners, although his precursor status was not fully recognized until the 1940s. This outstanding utopian visionary was also an early feminist:

> Social progress and change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women toward freedom. . . . Nothing causes overall social betterment faster than improving the living conditions of

> women . . . The degree of emancipation of women is the natural measure of general emancipation. (Fourier 1966, 132–133)

Other precursors of surrealism voiced their doubts and ambivalences on existing gender relations with such provocative candor and inspiration that the reader is compelled to see old problems in an entirely different light. If such writers do not always appear to us to be on the side of women's liberation, it is at least noteworthy that feminism's declared enemies have never found their work serviceable. In the writings of Lautréamont and Vaché, for instance, one may note hints of an ambiguous misogyny. In the work of a very few others—such as Joris-Karl Huysmans and Jarry—the hints are more numerous, with less ambiguity. However, there is so much else, so much more, in these authors, so much that is exalting and revolutionary, that it would be ridiculous to cast them aside solely because of what may seem to be misogynist passages. In the particular cases of Lautréamont, Jarry, and Vaché, there is also much that contradicts misogyny, including vigorous challenges to patriarchal pretensions. In any case, what interested and influenced the surrealists in these authors' works was certainly not their misogyny, but their unsettling and emancipatory qualities. That they were not free of contradictory elements is to be expected in the works of writers who so thoroughly explored their own unconscious and defied the dominant paradigms of their time and place.

Another major precursor of surrealism, Donatien-Alphonse-François de Sade, authored what are perhaps the most scandalous writings in the history of western civilization. For nearly two hundred years his works were banned in almost every country by the same puritanical censors who banned feminist and birth control literature. Sade was, in fact, one of the most vigorously anti-authoritarian writers of all time. Moreover, as the poet Guillaume Apollinaire was the first to point out,

> It is not by chance that the Marquis chose heroines [for his tales] instead of heroes. Justine is the woman of former times: subjugated, miserable, and less than human. Juliette, on the contrary, represents the new woman that he foresaw, a being of whom we still have scarcely an idea—a woman who, breaking away from mankind, will take wing and renovate the universe. (Apollinaire 1909, 18)

Yet often, especially in the United States, Sade is superficially dismissed as a misogynist and even as an apologist, in advance, of Nazi concentration camps. The latter charge is an especially grotesque slander, for apart from the fact that Sade himself spent twenty-seven years of his life in prison (always for his

ideas), it is known that his services as section leader during the French Revolution were deemed unacceptable by the Jacobin authorities because of his consistent opposition to the death penalty.

Sade's works are filled with an abundance of magnificent harangues against androcentric chauvinism:

> We must unquestionably recompense these women whom we have so cruelly enslaved. . . . O enchanting sex! You will be free. Why should the most divine half of humanity be chained up by the other? Break your chains, nature wishes it. (Sade 1954, 257)

Significantly, much of the best critical literature on Sade has been written by women surrealists, notably by Nora Mitrani and Annie Le Brun, coeditor of Sade's *Oeuvres complètes* and organizer of a major Sade exhibition.[15] Many other women surrealists, painters as well as poets, have found in Sade's writings a profound inspiration, among them Toyen (who illustrated *Justine*), Mimi Parent, Joyce Mansour, Debra Taub, and Belgian painter Jane Graverol. One might also mention Marie-Louise Berneri and Angela Carter who, although neither was active in the Surrealist Movement as such, made no secret of their strong solidarity with it. Berneri recognized Sade as an outstanding utopian and anarchist thinker and especially praised his insistence that "there could be no equality as long as people had not thrown off the yoke of religion" (Berneri 1982, 178). Carter's radical feminist reading, *The Sadean Woman*, contains much that is debatable but remains of exceptional interest in that it was intended largely to put certain key ideas of the *opus sadicum* at the service of the women's liberation movement (Carter 1978).

Surrealism's women precursors, although celebrated and cited in writings by the surrealists themselves, are rarely mentioned in critical studies, and their influence on the course of the movement appears not to have been examined. They are, however, sufficiently numerous and diverse to warrant a more detailed study. Here I shall simply note a few whose impact has been especially strong and lasting.

In view of the centrality of the notion of love in surrealism, the fact that poet Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (1786–1859) is cited as "surrealist in love" in Breton's first *Manifesto* in 1924 confers upon her particular importance (Breton 1967, 27). Interestingly, at that time her literary reputation was at low ebb, her best work long out of print. It is widely acknowledged that many figures now recognized as major in the history of poetry and painting were rescued from oblivion by the surrealists, but the official rehabilitation of Desbordes-Valmore did not get under way until 1955 with the publication of her selected

poems as volume 46 in Seghers's prestigious "Poètes d'aujourd'hui" [Poets of Today] series—in which, by the way, she was the first woman to be represented (Moulin, ed., 1955).

Also under the sign of love is the renowned Portuguese nun, Marianna Alcoforado (1642–1723), the Franciscan author of the passionate letters known throughout the world as the *Letters of a Portuguese Nun,* first published anonymously in 1669. Admired by the surrealists even before Breton's first *Manifesto* appeared, she was given a place of honor in the surrealist "Marseilles Game" in 1940 (a card game in which the traditional royal face cards are replaced by historic or imaginary protosurrealist characters). Alcoforado was also included by surrealist Benjamin Péret in his *Anthology of Sublime Love* (1956). "Rarely," wrote Péret of her letters, "has sublime love been expressed with such intensity" (Péret 1956, 132). Max Ernst did a painting of her, and she figures prominently in the work of several Portuguese surrealists.[16]

Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), author of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), was another favorite. With Desbordes-Valmore and the Portuguese nun, her name appears in 1923—a year before the first *Surrealist Manifesto*—in the review *Littérature,* under the heading "ERUTARETTIL" (*littérature* spelled backward: the surrealists' first declaration of their intention to turn literary values around).[17] Admired by Sade, who praised the "bizarre flashes" of her "brilliant imagination," Radcliffe was saluted in turn by Breton in 1932 as "surrealist in landscape." He discussed her work in more detail in his "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism" (1936) as well as in a lecture on poetry delivered in Haiti ten years later. There are numerous references to her in other surrealists' writings.[18]

"There will come a time," wrote surrealist poet Jehan Mayoux, "when the British empire will be totally forgotten, but people will still be interested in Emily Brontë" (Mayoux 1979, 176). Very few writers, female or male, have been esteemed by the surrealists more than Brontë (1818–1848). "All the surrealists," according to Luis Buñuel, were "deeply moved" by *Wuthering Heights* (Buñuel 1983, 205), and there is abundant evidence to corroborate this sweeping statement. André Thirion specifically recalls Aragon, Artaud, Breton, Crevel, Desnos, Péret, Sadoul, Tzara, Unik, and himself among the admirers of this wildest of English romantic novels.[19] *The Brontë Sisters, Daughters of Wind* is the title of a 1930 pamphlet by Crevel, illustrated by Marie Laurencin. That same year Buñuel and Unik wrote a screenplay based on *Wuthering Heights,* a project that did not bear fruit until 1953. A suite of Balthus's drawings for Brontë's classic were featured in the surrealist-oriented review *Minotaure* in 1935. Throughout the history of surrealism, "the moral significance of the

revolutionary nature of Emily Brontë's imagination and dreams," as Georges Bataille put it in 1957, has been a real force (Bataille 1973, 7). A survey of Brontë's impact on surrealism could fill an entire volume.

Another permanent presence in the surrealist castle is Hélène Smith (Catherine Elise Muller, 18??–1929), whose trance-induced global and interplanetary travels resulted in a splendorous profusion of poetic texts, paintings, drawings, and calligraphy. Surrealists rejected the other-worldly tenets of spiritualism, but early on they were deeply interested in all forms of psychic automatism and found much to admire in the products of Hélène Smith's wayward imagination. Breton cites her repeatedly in major books and articles all through his life. Hailed as a "celebrated medium, painter and inventor of languages" in the Breton-Eluard *Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism* (1938), she was one of twelve figures pictured on face cards in the Marseilles card game of 1940, in the Knowledge suite, along with Paracelsus and Hegel.[20]

Harder to assess, for the simple reason that published references are much rarer, is the influence on surrealism of Maria de Naglowska (ca. 1885–sometime after 1940), prolific theorist/practitioner of erotic magic. She is known in the English-speaking world only as the French translator of the controversial underground classic of occultism, *Magia Sexualis*, by the African American "affectional alchemist" Paschal Beverly Randolph.[21] An extensive literature exists on the surrealists' early and continuing interest in such mages and students of hermetic sciences as Fabre d'Olivet, René Guénon, and the mysterious Fulcanelli, but the Russian-born Naglowska has been overlooked. The neglect of her work by students of surrealism is especially surprising in view of the fact that she seems to have had personal contact with at least a few surrealists.

Revolutionaries make up yet another category of surrealism's women precursors. One of the movement's most renowned early collective declarations is an homage to anarchist Germaine Berton, who shot and killed fascist Marius Plateau in 1923.[22] As the group came to identify itself with the cause of workers' revolution, the names of revolutionaries such as Marxist Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), Bolshevik Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869–1939), and, somewhat later, anarchist-Communard Louise Michel (1830–1905) began to appear in surrealist publications.

In the 1940s surrealism encountered radical feminism for the first time in the work of pioneer socialist-feminist Flora Tristan (1803–1844). With her unique blend of revolutionary criticism and utopian imagination, underscored by her impassioned sensitivity to life's poetry and magic (she was the companion of occultist Eliphas Lévi and a good friend of Marceline Desbordes-

Valmore), Tristan is a "natural" for surrealism. That it took so long for the surrealists to discover her is a striking indication of the generalized and deeply ingrained antifeminism of French intellectual life. Breton cited Tristan in his 1945 book, *Arcane 17* [Arcanum 17]—the first surrealist work to take up specifically feminist themes—and in 1957 he prefaced several of Tristan's previously unpublished letters for the group's journal, *Le Surréalisme, même* [Surrealism, Itself].[23] A nearly forgotten name during those Cold War years, Tristan has since won a measure of the global reputation she deserves. Dominique Desanti, whose 1972 Tristan biography was a major factor in this revival, acknowledged Breton's writings as the initial source of her interest in Tristan (Desanti 1976, 280).

These are only a few of the women whose works helped shape the destiny of surrealism over the years.[24] Evaluation of their influence, both on the movement as a whole and on particular individuals, is a worthy project for the future. Yet even without such analysis, this much is clear: the male founders of surrealism readily identified themselves as the intellectual and poetic heirs of a sizable contingent of women thinkers, dreamers, rebels, innovators, and social critics. Apart from feminism, is there any other modern movement that boasts so many women ancestors?

It is difficult to say whether reading works by these or other women precursors led women toward surrealism or how much they may have influenced later women once they joined the movement. Eileen Agar, one of the few women participants in surrealism to have published a full-length memoir, mentions such precursors as Blake, Lewis Carroll, Sade, and Lautréamont, but no women (Agar 1988). Leonora Carrington recalls that Ann Radcliffe was among the authors most admired by Breton and his comrades when she met them in the mid-1930s. Curiously, however, she admitted in 1990 that she herself had never read any of Radcliffe's works, just as she had never read "so much as a line" by Radcliffe's early devotee, Sade.[25] Emmy Bridgwater readily proclaims herself "an admirer of Emily Brontë" but seems reluctant to consider her an "influence," and in fact she is far from sure that this admiration has had any real connection with her writing or painting.[26]

On the other hand, one of Dorothea Tanning's paintings is titled "A Mrs Radcliffe Called Today"; a charming photograph shows Bona de Mandiargues costumed as the Portuguese nun; and Meret Oppenheim in her later years dedicated works to such German romantics as Bettina Brentano and Suzanne Gontard. This, too, is a topic awaiting further study.

NOTES ON THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF THE FIRST SURREALIST GROUP, 1924–1929

> I would like my poetry to be read by a fourteen-year-old girl.
> —Isidore Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont

What is known of the attitudes of the first surrealists—the majority of whom were male—toward the "Woman Question," as it was called in those years? More particularly, how did this male majority relate to the women in the surrealist milieu?

Most of the first surrealists were young men in their early twenties—a few still teenagers—who had passed through the horrors of the First World War. Approximately two and a half million soldiers were killed or maimed in France alone during the 1914–1918 war. Critics often mention the "violence" and "excesses" of surrealism's early years, but it is important to keep in sight the fact that these characteristics were responses to a specific historical situation: the first world imperialist slaughter and its politically and economically catastrophic aftermath.

Unless social revolution comes to the rescue, war and postwar chaos lead inevitably to political reaction, of which misogyny is a major element. What is exceptional about the young men who founded surrealism is not that they occasionally reflected some of the misogynist climate of the postwar years, but the truly amazing extent to which they avoided and rejected it.

Without precisely being feminists, André Breton and his friends were the irreconcilable enemies of feminism's enemies, and thus in many ways could be considered feminism's allies. They concentrated their attacks on the apparatus of patriarchal oppression: God, church, state, family, capital, fatherland, and the military. All the ruling male chauvinist obsessions of the power elite of those years—productivity, progress, punishment, racial purity, repopulation, efficiency, nationalism, the conquest of nature, and all the rest—were objects of the surrealists' derision.

In matters of gender and sex, as in everything else, the first surrealist generation—men *and* women—were rebels and revolutionaries. The maxim, "Thought has no sex," set forth by André Breton and Paul Eluard in their 1929 "Notes on Poetry," indicates an affirmation of women's intellectual equality that was still rare in France in those years (Breton 1988:I, 1014). But Breton's later watchword, "I wish I could change my sex the way I change my shirt," shows that the early surrealists' questioning and challenging of gender stereotypes went much deeper than even the most radical of their contemporaries were willing to go (Breton 1937). At a time when Marxist and anarchist organiza-

tions either downplayed sexuality or ignored it entirely, surrealists carried out a long series of open group discussions on sexual activity—excerpts of which appeared in their journal.[27] As these discussions confirm, tolerance of so-called sexual deviance was much higher in the surrealist milieu than elsewhere. In the lives and work of several early surrealists—including Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, and Claude Cahun—gender ambiguity was a large factor. Several surrealists engaged in homosexual relations (René Crevel, Georges Malkine, and Claude Cahun openly, Louis Aragon more discreetly, and others, in France and elsewhere, in later years). Because of its pronounced sexual openness, the Surrealist Group as a whole was for many years—well into the 1940s—widely accused of being homosexual.[28]

As males who had no use for any of the proffered models of maleness—soldier, politician, cop, gangster, banker, businessman, athlete, bureaucrat, or boss—the men who founded surrealism could be called traitors to their sex. Not only did they reject such "masculine prerogatives" as law and order, reason and logic, they went so far as to champion their opposites, the so-called feminine virtues (or vices): intuition, impulsiveness, and "passivity" (as in automatic writing and trance-speaking). These young men made themselves *mediums* ("modest recording instruments" of the unconscious), a vocation long associated with women. In a brilliant manifesto Aragon and Breton hailed hysteria—a label commonly tossed at women whose emotional upheavals exceeded the boundaries of bourgeois propriety—as "a supreme means of expression."[29]

Far from regarding women as biologically "inferior" or "subordinate," these young admirers of Ann Radcliffe and Emily Brontë tended to recognize them as teachers, exemplars, and guides. The elusive Nadja provoked, as Pierre Naville put it, a "collective emotion" throughout the entire Surrealist Group (Naville 1977, 357). Breton's response to the group's 1929 inquiry on love consisted of a postscript to Suzanne Muzard's statement, declaring his total agreement with her views. In later years at least two male surrealists adopted the surnames of their female companions.[30]

For these men, women were not mere objects of male consumption, childbearing instruments, or status symbols. They recognized women as sources of revelation, as provokers of wonder, dreams, and freedom: as muses, one might say, but also as active subjects with their own desires and, above all, as partners in life's large and small adventures. The male surrealists' ideal—as was also true of women in the group—was not marriage and family, but rather free unions with free spirits. Surrealism has been largely a movement of childless couples and very small families. At an age when most young males settle into a callous

cynicism toward women, Breton and his friends exalted reciprocal love and denounced the enemies of love.

Their heroines were the French revolution's "first Amazon of Liberty," Théroigne de Méricourt, German romantics Bettina von Arnim and Caroline von Günderode, the anarchist assassin Germaine Berton, and flamboyant actresses such as Musidora, Pearl White, Louise Lagrange, Mae Murray, and Blanche Derval, who played a lesbian drug addict in a play much admired by Breton.[31] Also much admired were the African American nightclub stars Josephine Baker and Bricktop; the daughter of a noted presurrealist poet, Divine Saint-Pol-Roux, whose photograph appeared in *La Révolution surréaliste,* a seagull perched on her head; and the Jazz Age vaudevillian Sophie Tucker, whose recordings were favorites at the thriving surrealist commune at 54 Rue du Chateau.[32]

Yes, there is a lot of romanticism in all this, as they themselves were aware. (Surrealism, Breton conceded, could be considered the "tail" of romanticism, but a "strongly *prehensile* tail" [Breton 1978, 132].) There is also, no doubt, a certain amount of naiveté, uncertainty, ambivalence, anxiety in their attitude—and is that so surprising? Challengers of long-established repressive codes are not likely to get everything right on the first try. That which is new and revolutionary rarely emerges complete and all at once; it appears first in the trappings of the old, which it tosses aside as its self-confidence grows.

As with every current that is alive and in motion, contradictions existed in the original Surrealist Group. If women were equals in theory, in practice both men and women in the group often fell back on habit and custom. Aragon's glorification of brothels, Eluard's extreme (obviously neurotic) promiscuity, even Breton's gallantry (kissing women's hands, etc.) were not, to put it mildly, much help to the cause of women's emancipation.

A critical and historical approach enables us to perceive the revolutionary kernel in the sometimes not-so-revolutionary shell. The 1927 Surrealist Group declaration, "Hands Off Love!"—written by Aragon—contains formulations that now appear to us as male chauvinist.[33] Even here, however, in one of the "low points" in surrealist writing on women, a subversive kernel is evident. In a country where marriage and childbearing were held to be women's sole proper "destiny," the male surrealists boldly refused to reduce women to their procreative function and unhesitatingly defended birth control and divorce: essential planks in every feminist platform. The language of "Hands Off Love!" may not have been all that a woman of today could hope for, but the gist was clearly antagonistic to the patriarchal order. Significantly, too, male chauvinist rhetoric would never again appear in a Surrealist Group tract.

In other words, surrealism evolved, and as it grew, it left behind some of its

early rhetoric. The poet who wrote, "We shall be masters of ourselves, masters of women, and of love, too," in the *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924, would write twenty years later, in *Arcanum 17*, that the time had come "to make the ideas of women prevail at the expense of those of men," and eventually would identify surrealism historically as a direct continuation of feminism itself (Breton 1947, 88).[34] Surely it is not too much to suggest that the influence of women surrealists was a major factor in this evolution.

Critics who dismiss Breton's celebration of the "child-woman" as restrictive and sexist unwittingly reveal not only their ignorance of surrealism but also their own latent fear and hatred of children. From the surrealist point of view, childhood is not a demeaning category ("It is perhaps childhood," Breton wrote in the first *Manifesto*, "that comes closest to real life" [Breton 1967, 40]), and maturity is held to be little more than a cheap compromise. Far from being infantilized and helpless, the surrealist child-woman is a proud and defiant being who refuses to surrender the child's boldness, curiosity, and spirit of adventure. Moreover, the child-woman was no figment of Breton's imagination, but a real phenomenon exemplified in the 1930s within the Surrealist Movement itself by such figures as Meret Oppenheim, Gisèle Prassinos, Dora Maar, and Leonora Carrington—young women in their teens or early twenties who were admired by surrealists of both sexes for their creative audacity and enchanting genius (Alexandrian 1977, 242).

The child-woman, in any case, was neither the first nor the only woman celebrated by surrealists. In poetry, painting, and polemic they also championed the sorceress, vamp, succubus, temptress, seer, sphinx, wanton, outlaw, and dozens of other models of unconventional women. Many surrealists have written sympathetically of androgyny. From Melusine to Milady de Winter to Musidora, these models provided radical alternatives to the bourgeois/Christian ideal of the good, selfless, husband-worshipping, submissive, ignorant, fearful, pious, hardworking, obedient wife and mother.[35]

Surrealism has never been monolithic; diversity has always been one of its hallmarks. Sweeping criticism of the movement based on isolated quotations from the work of any one surrealist—even André Breton—is always misleading, and is especially so when it proves to be the result of a misundertanding. Unfortunately, snap judgments against surrealism not only have a long history but frequently become accepted critical platitudes. In her influential and in many ways admirable book, *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir charges Breton—and by implication the entire surrealist movement—with placing limits on women by identifying women with poetry. To make such an accusation, however, is to overlook the fact that surrealists regard poetry as limitless. For surrealists what poetry is and does automatically transcends all literary and

other conventional boundaries; it is always self-revelation, transformation, the breaking of chains, the becoming of freedom. At a time when the female population of France was largely confined to the most stifling roles sanctified by tradition, for a group of men to have recognized women as a force for revolution was itself a revolutionary act.

To have missed this is bad enough. But worse yet, nowhere does Beauvoir acknowledge the simple truth that surrealism has never been merely a group of men. Apart from a brief passage referring to *Nadja* (Beauvoir 1949, 263), *The Second Sex* fails to mention, much less quote, any of the women active in surrealism.

The surrealists' revolutionary challenge to dominant gender paradigms derived largely from the experience of surrealism itself. As their automatistic activities, long walks, games, and other forms of surrealist research stimulated radically new and different conceptions of life and the world, they began dreaming of radically new and different ways of regarding man/woman relationships. Surrealism inspired men and women to break the chains of traditional notions of gender—to question and supersede the claptrap of "manliness" and "femininity." Their aim, implicit in Breton's *Second Manifesto* (1929), was to determine that "point in the mind" at which male and female, no less than "life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived as contradictions" (Breton 1978, 129).

What little is known of the attitudes, activity, and achievements of the female minority in and around the first Surrealist Group during its formative years will be discussed in the introduction to the first section of this anthology. In this overview I have tried to outline the social and sexual context in which these women and their male friends lived, loved, dreamed, and struggled for revolution. In considering social movements, it helps to keep a sense of historical perspective, to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the anecdotal, and to not lose sight of the essential. It is well-known that the first Surrealist Group, like most other groups in those years, was male dominated and by no means entirely free of sexism. What made surrealism different is that more and more women kept joining it, expanding it, and changing it, and that the men in it changed too (or dropped out). Surrealism's increasing openness to women's full participation could not have occurred had the men who founded it been as hopelessly sexist as they have sometimes been portrayed. Despite their very real problems, confusions, and mistakes, the first Surrealist Group was probably the least sexist male-dominated group of its time.

SURREALISM: A CONTINUING CHALLENGE

> I notice that my white page has turned green.
> —Toyen

Looking at any phenomenon from a new angle or with a mass of new data at hand, one tends to question earlier assumptions and conclusions. Challenges are the essence of surrealism, and this anthology is brimful of them. The reader should have no trouble discovering stimulating confrontations galore in the work of every one of the women included in these pages.

Let us consider a few of the challenges posed by the anthology as a whole. Most obviously, this collection questions the numerous consciously or unconsciously sexist authors of volumes on surrealism that ignore women surrealists entirely. It refutes the unfounded but often repeated assertion that very few women took part in the movement and that those who did were somehow relegated to the role of "muse." It also defies the elitist narrowness of mainstream critics whose interest in surrealism is restricted to a handful of well-known figures in the plastic arts and opposes the cranky Francocentric misconception that surrealism as an exclusively French phenomenon. It refutes the Eurocentrism that wants us to ignore surrealism in the Arab world, the African diaspora, Asia, and the Americas, as well as the notion that surrealism is a static doctrine carved in stone in the 1920s. Instead, it shows us a long history of struggle, growth, dialectical advances, and renewal. Similarly, it subverts the madcap periodizations that attempt to assign an "end" to organized surrealism—in 1929, or 1939, or 1947, or 1966, or 1969, to cite but five of the many dates that have been proposed with varying degrees of seriousness.

Although this anthology contains only a sampling of the work of women surrealists, it shows that they have worked wonders in many genres of written expression. Surrealism in poetry would be much poorer without the radiant voices of Valentine Penrose, Joyce Mansour, Meret Oppenheim, Alice Rahon, Mary Low, Luiza Neto Jorge, Isabel Meyrelles, Marianne van Hirtum, Giovanna, Carmen Bruna, Jayne Cortez, Nancy Joyce Peters, and many others. For sheer subversive humor, the tales of Gisèle Prassinos, Leonora Carrington, Irène Hamoir, Nelly Kaplan, and Rikki Ducornet have never been surpassed. Claude Cahun, Nancy Cunard, Grace Pailthorpe, Mary Low, Suzanne Césaire, Jacqueline Johnson, Régine Raufast, Jacqueline Senard, Nora Mitrani, Françoise Sullivan, Elisabeth Lenk, Annie Le Brun, Alice Farley, and Haifa Zangana expanded surrealist theory and polemic into new realms of inquiry. Cahun, Low, Césaire, Silvia Grénier, and others helped formulate or refine its

revolutionary politics. Cunard and Césaire developed surrealism's critique of racism and related the movement to global Pan-Africanism. Ithell Colquhoun, Françoise Sullivan, Meret Oppenheim, and Alena Nádvorníková have expanded our consciousness of the possibilities of surrealist automatism. Cahun, Le Brun, Bruna, and Ducornet have brilliantly defended the freedom of the imagination against ideologists of all persuasions. Mitrani, Kaplan, Mansour, and Varo added whole new dimensions to erotic literature; Carrington and Unica Zürn contributed classics to the literature of madness. Prassinos, Carrington, Deharme, and Sage enriched the difficult art of nonsense. Others have written illuminating statements on their work as painters, photographers, sculptors, filmmakers, or dancers. In the library of surrealist proverbs, Gertrude Pape's "All my names know your leap" is as good as they come. In fields as diverse as film criticism, anthropology, historiography, biography, travelogues, psychology, reportage, sociology, scientific theory, children's stories, and philosophy, women surrealists have brought their insightful fire.

For most of these women, as for their male companions in the movement, surrealism entered their lives as a spark that ignited their self-awareness—a means enabling them to find their true voices and to learn to speak for themselves. But it should not be forgotten that these women also speak *for surrealism.* All that surrealism has been and will be has been shaped in part by their words and deeds. In the writings of Claude Cahun, Suzanne Césaire, Ikbal El Alailly, Nora Mitrani, Joyce Mansour, Marianne van Hirtum, Nelly Kaplan, Nancy Joyce Peters, Haifa Zangana, and many others, our appreciation of surrealism itself is deepened: of surrealism as collective and individual experience, a body of ideas, radical critique, poetic praxis, method of research, ludic adventure, revolutionary project, and way of life. Approaching many widely ignored aspects of surrealism in new and original ways, and always *from within,* they rouse us to perceive what surrealism is all about in new and original ways, so that our image of surrealism *as an activity* becomes not only clearer and more coherent but also more urgent. Here, perhaps, one will find the greatest challenge of all.

The achievements of surrealism's women writers and the challenges they pose were and are important not only for the Surrealist Movement but for all genuine seekers of knowledge, inspiration, and a better world. It is striking how contemporary so many of these writings are—how much they anticipate present-day radical and cultural preoccupations, how often texts written thirty, forty, or sixty-five years ago seem to go beyond the limits of current debates. Nancy Cunard, for example, unlike many who consider themselves antiracists today, fearlessly acknowledged the revolutionary implications of the critique of "whiteness"; far from being merely academic or aesthetic, her pas-

sion for African art and African American jazz was inseparable from her practical support to the world movement for Black liberation. Similarly, the "gender-bending" texts in these pages convey the message that true sexual freedom cannot be attained in a society mired in what Marx called the "fetishism of commodities." And it is impossible to overlook the radical ecological sensibility that runs through this book like a pack of wolves. Ecological concerns engaged the Surrealist Movement as a whole almost from the start; in surrealism, the adjective *wild* has always been a term of the highest prestige. But it is primarily the women in surrealism who stressed these matters, and it is they who deserve credit for making the ecological critique an integral part of the surrealist project.

Nature, wildlife, wilderness are constant, compelling themes in the work of surrealist women. Redefinition of the relation between humankind and other animals, solidarity with endangered species, a nonexploitative regard for the planet we live on: these are some of the dreams whose realization they call for. In their poetry and other writings as well as in the plastic arts, dance, and film we see the natural world in a myriad new lights. Time and again in the texts that follow, surrealist women voice the latent yearnings of a planet on the verge of disaster. Agar, Carrington, Césaire, Johnson, Mitrani, Low, Oppenheim, Rahon, Senard, and many others are not only manifest forerunners of deep ecology and ecofeminism but could even be considered exponents of these currents decades before either had a name. As surrealists, of course, they avoided the "New Age" techno-mysticism and other ideological fads—not to mention racism—that mars so much mainstream feminist and ecological literature today. What is most important is that these women found that surrealism itself embraces feminist as well as ecological concerns. Always implicit in surrealist thought, a radical ecological awareness is increasingly explicit in movement publications after 1945.

Meret Oppenheim identified the key methodological principle in this regard when she pointed out in 1955 that works produced via psychic automatism "will always remain alive and will always be revolutionary . . . because they are in organic liaison with Nature." This is the very basis of surrealism as a revolutionary community: the unity of theory and practice at the highest point of tension of individual and collective creation.

Such a conception of life and the world, defined by audacity and readiness for change, is the opposite of the dominant ideologies of our time. In these pages you will find no "postmodern" complacency, no apology for human misery, no blasé hopelessness in the face of cataclysm, no confidence in lesser evils, no scorn for utopia, no cynicism. All here is urgency and expectation,

and the conviction that a poetics of revolt is the only way that might—just might—lead us to something at least a little closer to earthly paradise.

By emphasizing the ecological dimension of revolutionary social transformation, women surrealists have given the surrealist notion of a nonrepressive civilization a far more concrete actuality than it had had before. Not only did they perceive the links among the emancipation of women, of the working class, of all humankind, and of nature—they also comprehended that all these emancipations are in reality but one. "Here at last," wrote Suzanne Césaire in 1941, referring to the domain of the Marvelous, "the world of nature and things makes direct contact with the human being who is again in the fullest sense spontaneous and natural. Here at last is the true communion and the true knowledge, chance mastered and recognized, the mystery now a friend, and helpful." In the heat of such inspirations, poetic insight points the way to a life worth living. Césaire and other women in the movement deserve a large share of the credit for surrealism becoming in effect *a new universal,* in the Hegelian sense: a realizable global vision of marvelous freedom for all.

The women's movement has never demanded too much; too often, alas, it has settled for much too little, too late. In no society on Earth are women fully equal; there is not one in which any of us, woman or man, is truly free. Many of the early surrealist slogans—such as "Open the Prisons!" and "Disband the Army!"—seem to me to be just what the women's movement needs today. And beyond all slogans, isn't it obvious that nothing less than our wildest dreams will enable women to rise from the depressing depths of the current military-industrial political impasse?

Make no mistake: this is not a time for despair. We can take heart from this striking coincidence: from exceedingly divergent backgrounds, starting points, and methods, surrealists and today's most radical feminists and ecologists have had to confront many of the same problems and enemies, and they share many of the same goals. As the women's movement enters a new period of radicalization and a new generation rediscovers feminism's visionary, utopian, romantic, anarchist, and revolutionary socialist heritage, more and more women will also discover surrealism.

I like to think that this anthology will help prepare the way for this fortuitous encounter.

Penelope Rosemont
Chicago, January 1997

Notes

1. Nothing even close to a comprehensive study of women's involvement in surrealism exists in any language. Useful material may be found in the *La femme surréaliste* issue of the French journal *Obliques* (1977) and the huge exhibition catalog, *La femme et le surréalisme* (1987). The standard reference, *Dictionnaire Général du surréalisme et de ses environs* (Biro and Passeron 1982), profiles less than half of the women included in the present collection; however, its entries on individual women remain the best source of information on the subject.

   As the first book on the subject in English, *Women Artists of the Surrealist Movement* (Chadwick 1985), although limited to women active in the visual arts before 1947, is a work of importance and has been very influential. Its overall assessment of surrealism, however, and especially of women's participation in the movement, seems to me to be misguided and inadequate.

2. Chadwick (1985) focuses on twelve women "associated with" surrealism, as does Renée Riese Hubert in *Magnifying Mirrors: Women, Surrealism and Partnership* (1994). The *Surrealism and Women* issue of the University of Iowa journal *Dada/Surrealism* (1990), features only ten. (This special issue was later reissued as a book under the same title; see Caws et al. 1991.)

3. Even Chadwick conceded that "[N]o group or movement has ever defined such a revolutionary role for [women]. And no other movement has had such a large number of active women participants" (Chadwick 1985, 7).

4. See, for example, Orenstein 1973 and Hill et al. 1974.

5. Anne Ethuin sent me a copy of this letter, which is addressed to Prof. Georgiana M. Colvile. Ethuin has asked me to specify that her willingness to participate in the present anthology is based precisely on her recognition that the motivation of this project is neither separatist nor otherwise hostile to surrealism.

6. Anthologies prepared by surrealists or with their close cooperation include Viteslav Nezval's *Surrealismus* (1936), featuring work by Claude Cahun, Gisèle Prassinos, Valentine Hugo, Meret Oppenheim, Dora Maar, Katy King, and Toyen; Herbert Read's *Surrealism* (1936), with texts by Gisèle Prassinos, Valentine Penrose, and Alice Rahon Paalen as well as reproductions by Eileen Agar, Valentine Hugo, Meret Oppenheim, Grace Pailthorpe, and Toyen; the "Surrealist Number" of *View* (October/November 1941), edited by Nicolas Calas, which features texts by Suzanne Césaire and Mary Low as well as reproductions

by Aube Breton, Leonora Carrington, and Kay Sage; the "Surrealist Section" of the annual *New Road 1943*, edited by Toni del Renzio, with texts by Leonora Carrington, Ithell Colquhoun, and Valentine Penrose; J. H. Matthews's *The Custom-House of Desire: A Half-Century of Surrealist Stories* (1975), which contains tales by Carrington, Marianne van Hirtum, Joyce Mansour, and Gisèle Prassinos; and Heribert Becker, Edouard Jaguer, and Petr Kral, eds., *Das surrealistische Gedicht* (1985), which includes Emmy Bridgwater, Anne Ethuin, Annie Le Brun, Joyce Mansour, Alice Rahon, Valentine Penrose, Nancy Joyce Peters, Gisèle Prassinos, Edith Rimmington, Penelope Rosemont, Zdena Tominová, and Unica Zürn.

In contrast, Francis J. Carmody and Carlyle MacIntyre, *Surrealist Poetry in France* (1953); Lucy Lippard, *Surrealists on Art* (1970), which features fifty selections by thirty-one authors; and Michael Benedikt, *The Poetry of Surrealism* (1974), a volume of over 400 pages, chose to omit women altogether.

7. The most amazing omission in this regard is undoubtedly William S. Rubin's *Dada and Surrealist Art* (1968). In this oversize volume of 525 pages, not one woman surrealist is discussed. Leonora Carrington is represented by one postage-stamp-sized reproduction; Meret Oppenheim is dismissed in one sentence; Frida Kahlo is mentioned once in passing. Marcelle Loubchansky, Maria Martins, Mimi Parent, Judit Reigl, Kay Sage, and Toyen—to cite only women whose work figures in André Breton's *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1965)—are completely ignored. Prof. Rubin was for many years the chief curator of the Painting and Sculpture Collection at the New York Museum of Modern Art.

8. J. H. Matthews noted a quarter of a century ago that "Something about surrealism brings out the killer instinct in the majority of critics" (Matthews 1970, 226). More recent critics have been even more hostile. For a survey of the field, see Guy Ducornet 1992.

9. The notion of surrealism as heightened awareness is nicely developed by the philosopher and Taoist scholar Angus C. Graham (see especially Graham 1985, 207–227).

10. Joyce Mansour, on the 19 February 1960 BBC radio broadcast, "In Defense of Surrealism." Unable to obtain the transcript, I have translated from the excerpts published in French in *BIEF: Jonction surréaliste* no. 12 (15 April 1960).

11. On surrealism's early political development, see especially Breton's 1934 lecture, "What Is Surrealism?" in Breton 1978, 112–141, and Franklin Rosemont's introduction to the same volume; Breton 1935; Nadeau 1945; Crastre 1963; Bonnet 1988 and 1992; Schwarz 1977; and Lewis 1988.

12. Breton, "Prolegomena to a Third Manifesto of Surrealism or Else" (1942) in Breton 1978, 210.

13. For a useful discussion of surrealism's ethic of desire, see Alexandrian 1977, 222.

14. Bataille (1994) summarizes the sorry history of the 1930 anti-Breton pamphlet, *Un Cadavre* [A Corpse], noting that most contributors to it almost immediately regretted and repudiated it, including Bataille himself, who destroyed most of the copies. See also Alexandre 1968; Aragon 1968; Baron 1969; Buñuel 1983; Dalí 1942; Duits 1969; Gascoyne 1991; Naville 1977; Rosenthal 1975; Soupault 1981; Thirion 1975; Penrose 1983; and Pastoureau 1992. See also Antonin Artaud's letters from 1932 on, in his *Oeuvres complètes* (Gallimard). Several of these writers were expelled from the Surrealist Group, and others withdrew from it as a result of various disagreements. All are critical of André Breton, and some severely so, but none of them lends any support to the critics' myth of Breton as autocrat, dictator, or "Pope."

15. Nora Mitrani's short but powerful essays on Sade are included in Mitrani 1988. Annie Le Brun's major work on Sade is her *Soudain un bloc d'abime, Sade,* the introduction to Sade's *Oeuvres complètes* (Le Brun 1986; English translation, Le Brun 1991). See also the lavish catalog of the Sade exhibition (Le Brun 1989).

16. In correspondence, two major figures of surrealism in Portugal—Artur do Cruzeiro Seixas and Mario Cesariny—have emphasized the permanent mythic presence of the Portuguese nun in the life of the movement there. A recent edition of the *Love Letters,* published in English in Lisbon, was illustrated by Portuguese surrealist painter Mario Botas. See also Correia 1973.

17. "ERUTARETTIL" appeared in *Littérature* (new series, nos. 11–12, October 1923), 24–25, and is reprinted in Pierre, ed., *Tracts surréalistes,* 1980, 12–13.

18. See André Breton, "Surrealism Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" (1932) and "Limits Not Frontiers of Surrealism" (1936) in Breton 1978, 84, 155–156; Breton 1991, 27. See also Heine 1934 and Calas 1940, 405; Le Brun 1982, *passim.*

19. André Thirion in a letter to the author dated 11 October 1990.

20. Breton refers to Hélène Smith in *Nadja* (1928), the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1929), and in his important essay, "The Automatic Message," the original publication of which (in *Minotaure* in 1933) featured reproductions of eight examples of her automatistic paintings and calligraphy. A few lines of her "Ultra-Martian Writing" are reproduced in

Breton's album on myths in *First Papers of Surrealism,* the catalog of the International Surrealist Exhibition in New York in 1942. A list of significant events of the century in the 1950 *Surrealist Almanac* notes the 1900 publication of Theodore Flournoy's book about her (Flournoy 1963), and her death in 1929. In his *Entretiens* (1952) Breton once again stressed Hélène Smith's deep and lasting importance for surrealism.

On the "Marseilles Game," see "Le Jeu de Marseilles" in Breton, 1967, 58–66. Originally reproduced in *VVV* No. 2–3 (New York, March 1943), the cards were issued as a deck in the 1980s by André Dimanche of Marseilles.

21. The "Lexique succinct de l'érotisme" in the catalog of the 1959 International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris noted Maria de Naglowska's importance, and it is noteworthy that the single best study of her life and work is by surrealist Sarane Alexandrian (Alexandrian 1977, 185–206). See also Deveney 1996.

22. On Germaine Berton, see Pierre, ed., *Tracts surréalistes,* 1980, 382–384.

23. Breton's preface to Flora Tristan's letters was reprinted in Breton 1970, 156–157; an English translation appears in Breton 1978, 296–297.

24. Surrealists have also expressed their enthusiasm for the work of Clara Reeve, Mary Shelley, and Emily Dickinson, among many others. Benjamin Péret's *Anthologie de l'amour sublime* includes texts by Héloise, Madame de Lafayette, Julie de Lespinasse, Suzanne Gontard, Bettina von Arnim, Juliette Drouet, Elizabeth Barrett, and Mirra Lohvitskaia.

25. Leonora Carrington in conversation with the author, March/April 1989.

26. Emmy Bridgwater in a letter to the author dated 19 June 1992.

27. A transcription of the first two sessions appeared in *La Révolution surréaliste* no. 11 (15 March 1928). The complete 1928–1932 discussions were published as *Recherches sur la sexualité* (Pierre, ed., 1990), and in an English translation as *Investigating Sex* (Pierre, ed., 1992), with an interesting afterword by Dawn Ades.

    Gala Dalí presided over a later (1933–1934) series of discussions on sexuality; see "Soirées avec Gala," in Pastoureau, 1992, 147–156.

28. This subject is reviewed in Ducornet 1992, 53–62.

29. An English translation of "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria" is included in the "Surrealist Documents" section of Breton 1978, 320–321. See also the catalog, *Surrealism in 1978: 100th Anniversary of Hysteria* (Milwaukee, 1978).

30. Jean Lévy adopted the surname of his companion, Marcelle Ferry, and became well known as Jean Ferry. Reuben Mednikoff, after the death of his wife, Grace Pailthorpe, changed his name to Mednikoff-Pailthorpe.

31. P.-L. Palau's *Les Détraquées* [The Deranged Women] is discussed by Breton in *Nadja* (Breton 1960, 39–51). The play was later published as a pamphlet-insert in *Le Surréalisme, même* no. 1 (October 1956), with a post-script by Palau indicating that Joseph Babinsky had also assisted in preparing the script.

32. André Thirion, in a letter to the author dated 13 May 1989, listed some of the 78 r.p.m. records he had purchased between 1927 and 1930, and which he still possessed, including Sophie Tucker's "I Ain't Got Nobody" and "many other Sophie Tuckers." See also Thirion 1975, 95.

33. "Hands Off Love!" is reprinted in Pierre, ed., *Tracts surréalistes*, 1980, 78–84.

34. In "Surrealism in Its Living Works" (1953) Breton wrote that surrealism marks "the culmination of a long line of speculation, which apparently goes back to the middle of the eighteenth century, tending to give women a greater and greater share in things" (Breton 1962, 358; English translation, 1967, 300).

35. This point is discussed by Nancy Joyce Peters in "Woman and Surrealism."