A BOOK OF
SURREALIST GAMES

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"Poetry should be made by all."
—Lawrence
SURREALIST GAMES

Poetry should be made by all (Lautréamont)

The Surrealists initiated the most radically liberating critique of reason of the century. Their brilliant investigations were conducted through art and polemic, manifesto and demonstration, love and politics. But most specially and remarkably, it was through games, play, techniques of surprise and methodologies of the fantastic that they subverted academic modes of enquiry, and undermined the complacent certainties of the reasonable and respectable. Playful procedures and systematic stratagems provided keys to unlock the door to the unconscious and to release the visual and verbal poetry of collective creativity.

These methods and experiments were at the centre of the Surrealist provocation of bourgeois normalities. They borrowed children's games, invented techniques to exploit the unpredictable outcomes of chance and accident, and discovered new and creative uses for automatism. To facilitate their own researches into the secrets of the human heart and mind they appropriated, with magisterial insouciance, procedures of enquiry from the academic disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology and philosophy. They arbitrarily transformed innocent objects into magical images, and reinstated the fetish in the ceremonies of art.

Surrealist games and procedures are intended to free words and images from the constraints of rational and discursive order, substituting chance and indeterminacy for premeditation and deliberation. Surrealism takes the logic and continuity of the dream to have a truly given signification, equalled only by the revelatory power of the unexpected analogy, the marvellous conjunction: . . . I madly love everything that adventurously breaks the thread of discursive thought and suddenly ignites a flare illuminating a life of relations fecund in another way wrote Breton. Such 'chance encounters' transgress deductive laws and transcend the logical systems of classical rationalism.

Such relations — the spontaneous, extra-lucid, insolent rapport . . . between one thing and another . . . which common sense hesitates to confront — may be discovered in dreams, in the mental play of poetic reverie, in the induced trance and the systematic disordering of the senses famously prescribed by Rimbaud, and in the practice of automatic techniques. To these solitary exercises of the imagination, significantly freed in each case from the composing rules of logical discourse, the Surrealists added the absorbing and ordered procedures of creative collaboration and the game. These activities they valued especially for their emphatic repudiation of individualistic artistic value, and their potential for collectively achieved revelation.

They have those characteristics of games defined by Roger Caillois, the French critic associated for a time with the Surrealists: they are freely entered into; separated from the run of ordinary 'serious' life, they are circumscribed by their own time and space; they are uncertain, their outcomes not predetermined; they are economically unproductive and not concerned with material interests; they are governed by rules; they are associated with imaginative projection and make-believe. In elaborating the famous definition provided by Huizinga in HOMO LUDENS thus far, Caillois might have added that they are entered into for pleasure, and may bring unpremeditated insights. In many of these aspects they have much in common with art.

In one particular and important respect Surrealist play is more like a kind of provocative magic. This is in its irrepressible propensity to the transformation of objects, behaviour and ideas. In this aspect of its proceedings Surrealism makes manifest its underlying political programme, its revolutionary intent. The First Manifesto ends: It [Surrealism] leads to the permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to its substitution for them in the solution of the
principal problems of life. Sweeping and vague as it is, it cannot be
doubted that this grand ambition was serious. Subsequent publications
and manifestos developed and elaborated a complex of insights relating
the life of the individual psyche to the dynamics of society and history,
some powerfully original, some simplistic, some absurdly extreme or utopian. This is not the occasion for a history of Surrealist
political interventions and provocations, nor for the re-telling of the
complex story of its own political travails, the bitter arguments, confrontations, expulsions and reconciliations. But there is no other move-
ment in the history of this troubled century, surely, which has linked
ideas of revolutionary political change so closely to the operations of
magical transformation in art and poetry, and sought to subvert familiar
social relations and received ideas in every sphere by subjecting them
to rigorously witty and fantastic interrogations.

Here collected for the first time is a compendium of Surrealist
games, strategies and procedures. It is for those who wish to employ
for themselves the techniques of Surrealist enquiry and discovery; it
sets out the rules and directions for playing the games. There has been
nothing like it: much of the material gathered here has been previously
documented only in obscure journals, or in magazines long since
de\'unct and difficult to come by. It is presented in the spirit of its sub-
ject, to offer the means to fulfil those aims (among others) of Sur-
realism described by its early historian, Julien Levy:

To exploit the mechanisms of inspiration.

To intensify experience.

We have lived for too long in the dreary region of homo
economicus, our lives shadowed by principles of self-interest, utilita-
rian 'necessities', instrumental moralities. But we are permitted to
hope; to revive those great and optimistic words of Breton: Perhaps
the imagination is on the verge of recovering its rights. We must wel-
come, as did the Surrealists, the re-entry into modern life of homo
ludens, the imaginative man at play, the intuitive visionary.

MEL GOODING, 1991
AUTOMATISM

THE PRIMARY METHOD OF SURREALISM. AS A
PROCEDURE IT FORMS PART OF MANY OF THE GAMES AND
ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN THIS BOOK.
SOLITARY AND COLLECTIVE AUTOMATIC TECHNIQUES, AND THE
EXPLOITATION OF CHANCE ARE CENTRAL TO MANY SURREALIST
GAMES. THE ORIGINAL SURREALISTS SOON CAME TO REALIZE THE
LIMITATIONS OF 'PURE AUTOMATISM'. AUTOMATIC TECHNIQUES
MAY BE USED AS A BEGINNING OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY, TO
STIMULATE AND ENCOURAGE SPONTANEITY OF UTTERANCE OR
IMAGE-MAKING.
AUTOMATIC WRITING

Automatic writing is the most direct of Surrealist techniques. Sit at a table with pen and paper, put yourself in a receptive frame of mind, and start writing. Continue writing without thinking about what is appearing beneath your pen. Write as fast as you can. If, for some reason, the flow stops, leave a space and immediately begin again by writing down the first letter of the next sentence. Choose this letter at random before you begin, for instance a ‘t’, and always begin this new sentence with a ‘t’.

Although in the purest version of automatism nothing is ‘corrected’ or re-written, the unexpected material produced by this method can be used as the basis for further composition. What is crucial is the unpremeditated free-association that creates the basic text. Apart from the passage by Breton and Soupault, the examples here have been re-worked to a greater or lesser extent. They have been chosen to demonstrate a range of automatic writing, from the humour of Péret to the magical stories of Desnos to the more aggressive stance of the black poet Aimé Cesaire. The first example is from THE MAGNETIC FIELDS, the first Surrealist book of purely automatic texts.

HONEYMOON

To what are mutual attractions due? There are some jealousies more touching than others. I willingly wander in such baffling darkness as that of the rivalry between a woman and a book. The finger on the side of the forehead is not the barrel of a revolver. I believe that although we paid heed to each other’s thinking, the automatic ‘Of nothing’ that is our proudest denial did not once need to be uttered during the whole wedding-spree. Lower than the stars there is nothing to stare at. No matter what train you may be travelling in, it is dangerous to lean out of the carriage-door window. The stations were plainly distributed about a bay. The sea that to the human eye is never so beautiful as the sky did not leave us. In the depths of our eyes disappeared neat reckonings bearing on the future like those of prison walls.

ANDRÉ BRETON AND PHILIPPE SOUPAULT
THE EXQUISITE CORPSE

For a minimum of three players.

The players sit around a table and each writes on a sheet of paper a definite or indefinite article and an adjective, making sure their neighbours cannot see them. The sheets are folded so as to conceal the words, and passed round to the next player. Each player then writes a noun, conceals it, and the process is repeated with a verb, another definite or indefinite article and adjective, and finally another noun. The paper is unfolded and the sentences read out. Players may agree small changes to ensure grammatical consistency.

This is the simplest version of the game, more complicated sentence structures can be agreed beforehand.

The game acquired its name from the first sentence obtained in this way:

The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine.

Further examples:

The wounded women disturb the guillotine with blond hair.

Caraco is a lovely bitch: lazy as a dormouse and gloved in glass so as not to have to do a thing, she strings pearls to pay the piper.

The avenged topaz shall devour with kisses the paralytic of Rome.

The flame-coloured breast surpasses by one step, one finger, one mouthful, the melodious breasts.

The endless sex sleeps with the orthodox tongue.
DEFINITIONS
OR QUESTION AND ANSWER

For two or more players.
The procedure is similar to that of the previous game. A question is written down, the paper folded to conceal it from the next player, who writes an answer.
The paper is unfolded to reveal the result. Remarkable facts emerge.

What is equality?
It is a hierarchy like any other.

What is reason?
A cloud eaten by the moon.

What is suicide?
Several deafening chimes.

What is physical love?
Half of pleasure.

What is absence?
Calm, limpid water, a moving mirror.

What is military service?
The noise of a pair of boots tumbling down a staircase.

What is day?
A woman bathing nude at nightfall.

What is a torrent of blood?
Shut up! Delete that abominable question.
**CONDITIONALS**

For two or more players.

The same procedure as before, but in this case the first player must write a hypothetical sentence beginning with 'If' or 'When', then conceal it. The second player writes a sentence in the conditional or future tense.

If there were no guillotine
Wasp would take off their corsets.

When children strike their fathers
All young people will have white hair.

If octopi wore bracelets
Ships would be towed by flies.

If your shadow's shadow visited a hall of mirrors
The sequel would be postponed indefinitely until the next issue.

If mercury ran till it was out of breath
Believe me, there'd be trouble.

**SYLLOGISMS**

For three players.

Using the same procedure as the preceding games, the three players construct a syllogism. The first player writes down the first premise, a proposition beginning with 'All', then conceals it by folding the paper. The second player writes down the second premise and conceals it. The third player writes the conclusion, beginning with 'Therefore'. The syllogism is then read out.

All aristocrats look with terror at the scaffold.
There's nothing at all on the desert's arid palm.
Therefore the falling salt is a handkerchief.

**OPPOSITES**

For a minimum number of three players.

The first player writes a sentence, a question or a statement, at the head of a sheet of paper, and passes it to the next player. This player writes the absolute opposite of this sentence, phrase by phrase according to any idea of 'opposite'. He then folds the sheet to cover only the first sentence. This has the effect of transforming the negation into an affirmation, which the third player must, in turn, negate. Before passing on the sheet, this player also folds it, but only so as to cover the previous sentence. This process may continue as long as the players desire, or the paper allows.

When my mother swigs champagne.
My father's corpse gets drunk on chianti.
Our mothers' infants dry up tearlessly.
The moribund waters my fatherland.
An infant desiccates our universe.
An old corpse waters their afterlife.
Two infants absorb what precedes death.

M SANDOZ, F R SIMON, M ZIMBACCA
**ECHO POEMS**

For one, two, or more players.

The aim is to write a poem whose two halves, laid out in two columns, echo one another. The ‘echo’ may be achieved in various ways: by the phonetic correspondences of rhyme or half-rhyme, by puns, by rearranging syllables, or by methods which do not depend in any way upon the phonetic properties of the words. One might use, for example, the literal or free-associating ‘opposites’ of the previous game, as in the poem below.

Write the first sentence in the left-hand column. The last part of this sentence is then transformed into the first part of the sentence in the right-hand column (in the example, ‘the migrant triangles’ become ‘the circular suggestion’). The second sentence is then completed however one chooses, and this part generates the first half of the second sentence in the left-hand column (‘fickle fleeces’ become ‘faithful plumage’ etc.), and so on.

The poem’s title is the ‘echo’ of the final phrase.

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**ONE INTO ANOTHER**

For a minimum of three players, although a larger number is preferable.

One player withdraws from the room, and chooses for himself an object (or a person, an idea, etc.). While he is absent the rest of the players also choose an object. When the first player returns he is told what object they have chosen. He must now describe his own object in terms of the properties of the object chosen by the others, making the comparison more and more obvious as he proceeds, until they are able to guess its identity.

The first player should begin with a sentence such as ‘I am an (object) . . . ’

I am a very beautiful female BREAST, particularly long and serpentine. The woman bearing it agrees to display it only on certain nights. From its innumerable nipples spurs a luminous milk. Few people, poets excepted, are able to appreciate its curve.

Ava Amich

Benjamin Peret

I am a CHRISTMAS TREE seen several days after the festivities. My top is triangular like all Christmas trees. Like them I hold some surprises in store for children, but also continue to affect a certain category of adults in that I participate simultaneously in times past and present.

Elise Breton

I am a hardened SUNBEAM that revolves around the sun so as to release a dark and fragrant rainfall each morning, a little after midday and even once night has fallen.

Jean Schuster

I am a gleaming NECKTIE knotted around the hand so as to run across those throats at which I’m placed.

Toyen

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For any number of players. This is simply the parlour-game 'Chinese Whispers'. The company sits in a circle. The first player whispers a sentence to his neighbour, who whispers the same sentence to the next player, and so on. The first and last sentences are then compared.


You must dye blue the pink bags fathomed by orange parapets. At all costs forget the fifth paragraph of 'Paradise Lost'.

For two, or preferably three or four, players. A method for writing prose texts. The players begin writing, and as they do so, each in turn, in strict rotation, speaks aloud a word from the phrase he is writing at that moment. The other players must incorporate this 'marker-word' into their text, immediately coupling it with another word, which remains secret. Proceeding thus (marker-word + secret word), each player writes a text which parallels that of the other players. The marker-words and the secret words may be joined in whatever way the players choose.

In the examples below, marker-words are italicised.

Player A

Your hair of rare feather swims in the vulnerable night that spreads upon folds of inaccessible fog. This evening I'm bogged down and your damp shoulders end up burying me under the gaze of the veiled bird of smiles and mad laughter. Come at daybreak*, under the murderous flames, drowsy from homecoming. Boredom leaks from the wells around your devil's eyes, in which the glow-worm is born. Here I designate under the strength of unknown territories, the little-known discord of hands painted on an eye, the limpid open eye of the night.

Player B

The hair of Death is rare in the night, the night, night wherein it spreads no fog.

The fog is dismal, the evening too, and shoulders sob, an end to childhood.

A gaze reached us through the veil and I laughed suddenly. Full-stop* perhaps. Flame and love. To drowse tomorrow from boredom retrieved from its well of ferns where devils danced.

The glow-worm of the seas designates its victims and the territories of foot-prints are known in the town, where our wakings are painted. An eye wends its way there and opens, opens.

*In French 'point du jour' = day-break, 'point' = full-stop.
OTHER WAYS OF MAKING TEXTS

To make a Dadaist poem
Take a newspaper.
Take a pair of scissors.
Choose an article as long as you are planning to
make your poem.
Cut out the article.
Then cut out each of the words that make up this
article and put them in a bag.
Shake it gently.
Then take out the scraps one after the other in the
order in which they left the bag.
Copy conscientiously.
The poem will be like you.
And here you are a writer, infinitely original and
endowed with a sensibility that is charming
though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.

TRISTAN TZARA

French Clarendon Extra Cond No 10
70 POINT

Anarchist WRESTLES
EUROPEANS Demonstrate
Graduating SCHOLARS Prompted
Auspiciously Decorated TURKISH BUILDINGS
GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEYOR Contemplates Disturbance
Newspaper Publishing Interesting FINANCIAL TELEGRAPHIC REPORTS

EXTINCTION COLLECTION
19 A 144 84 22
12 POINT

Determined POLICEMEN
Caught Notorious Burglars Flustering

Exhausted SOLDIERS RETURN
Numerous Hazards are Encountered Abroad

Found poem
Tout pourrait s'arranger si bien
PARIS EST UN GRAND VILLAGE
Surveillez
Le feu qui couve
LA PPIÈRE
Du beau temps
Sachez que
Les rayons ultra-violets ont terminé leur tâche
Courte et bonne

LE PREMIER JOURNAL BLANC
DU HASARD
Le rouge sera

Le chanteur errant
OU EST-IL ?
dans la mémoire
dans sa maison
au bâ l'ardent

Je sais,
en dansant
Ce qu'on a fait, ce qu'on va faire

ANDRÉ BRETON, Poem, 1924

TO MAKE A SURREALIST STORY

Take a newspaper, magazine or book: cut and paste at will.
This story was assembled from the London Evening Standard of 6th June, 1936.

FINAL NIGHT OF THE BATH

Over two thousand people had taken tickets for this season's murder.
Indian incense perfumed the room where people sat at ten round tables
decorated with mauve and yellow irises, and were offered the choice of
a succession of appetising meals and boiling bathwater up to 2 am. One
cutlet was handed to the guest; this was a Zouave, extremely suscepti-
bile to drought and other scares. He went away and called out:

'Alice, when you have done put the lights out; the argument against
a high rate is the tendency to rush forward which, in the case of big
men, ends in cracking; remember that my legs were exceedingly long
and my hair is outlined with electric light for the occasion.'

His wife, a débutante this year, asked for a hot bath, which Miss
Blatch, the landlady, prepared for her in the bathroom, upon which the
searchlights beat, uniforms marched, trumpets and drums and bugles
played, and caparisoned horses cantered.

'I do hope I shall not have to wait long,' she said; 'I could take the
crown back to England: a murderer is composing an opera for the Coro-
nation which deals with members of the Royal Family, Ministers of
State, representatives of the Church and members of the Opposition.
They make their entry, as they did to this vale of sorrow, one at a time,
astounding the doctor, devastating the father, and astonishing the
whole world. It ends with a riotous shooting match and seals the
friendship of English-speaking peoples.'

She returned and a little later went upstairs, to disappear into the
smoke and the dim curtain of the approaching battle.

The King gave his opinion frankly. 'I think she has a very good
chance,' he said; 'It was only a few minutes after I heard the last sound
in the bathroom that I heard the organ playing. We did not think she
seriously meant to go swimming because the water was so cold.'

A little later, according to reports from Batavia, she was dead.

The body was left lying on the pavement of Downing Street and was

damaging to Mr Baldwin's reputation. When they saw it Sir Samuel's
friends said that the assassination was a dastardly deed.

The inquest was held next day and a verdict of accidental death was

returned.

Now Mr Baldwin has taken the body back into the Cabinet Room; it
contains an exhortation to read 'The Daily Worker' and a form for join-
ing the Communist Party.

ROGER ROUGHTON

THE METHOD OF
RAYMOND ROUSSEL

This method of writing stories was invented by Raymond Roussel.
Choose a number of words that have double meanings. Join them
together until you have a phrase which makes some sort of sense. This
phrase will have at least two distinct meanings. Your task is now to
write a narrative in which the phrase constitutes the first and last
words of the narrative. Roussel allowed himself to alter a single letter
in one of the words chosen. (In the example, prune becomes brune.)

THE GREENISH SKIN

The greenish skin of the ripening plum [La peau verdâtre de la prune
un peu mûre . . .] looked as appetising as anyone might wish. I there-
fore chose this fruit from amongst the various delicacies made ready on
a silver platter for the señora's return.

With the point of a knife I made an imperceptible hole in the delicate
peel and, taking a phial from my pocket, I poured in several drops of a
quick-working poison.

'You betrayed me, Natte,' I said in an expressionless voice. 'Now
meet your fate.'

And I replaced the fatal fruit.

I was stifling in my picador's costume, my wig and the great hat. The
drawing-room chandeliers rivalled the footlights in brilliance, dazzling
me. The doors were loaded with black garments, and across the rows of
gilded chairs, low-necked, glittering evening-gowns were strewn. This
great Spanish lady lacked for nothing. Suddenly, the sound of sleigh-
bells and the crack of a whip from the wings indicated Natte's return.

I quickly seized my voluminous cape, cast over a chair on my
entrance, and sprang upon the bed, whose closely drawn curtains per-
mitted me to watch without being seen.

Natte appeared, the lady of the house in person. Still beautiful despite
her forty-six years, thanks to artificial means, in particular, to the
miraculous dye she employed to preserve the brilliant and intense
blackness of her hair. Her features, however, were unfortunately begin-
ing to fade a little, and make-up could not conceal a number of wrink-
les at the corners of her eyes and mouth.

Little Madame Dé, charming as an Andalusian soubrette, had also
entered. Dismissed by Natte after a brief exchange, she departed with
her mistress's cloak. Left alone, Natte sat down to her supper.

'Turquoise, O Turquoise, how I love you!' she exclaimed, her voice
trembling.

Turquoise was a young muleteer with whom Natte was deceiving
me. An intercepted letter, telling all, had impelled me to murder.

'How sweet is the thought of you, Turquoise, O my young lover!' said
Natte again, her gaze dreamily unfixed.

Then rising in agitation:

'Lord God, if Mirliton knew — he'd kill me!'

Mirliton, I am he, the abandoned picador. To dispel her fears, Natte
began to eat. The Spanish type to perfection, she had two beauty spots,
one on her chin, one on her cheek, and her magnificent black hair,
reflecting the stage lights, obliterated all thought of her ageing features.

'What is Turquoise doing at this moment?' she murmured, between a
piece of layered cake and a small tart. 'He is thinking of me, as I of him'.

From my observation post, I attentively watched her supper
diminish. Natte sought to calm herself.
'Mirliton knows nothing, he loves me, trusts me absolutely...'
She had just finished an apricot; nothing but the fatal fruit remained. She took it between two fingers.
'What if Mirliton knew,' she continued in a hollow voice.
Then she bit...
The effect was instantaneous. She rose to open a window, as if suffocating, turned about several times beating the air with her arms and fell dead upon the carpet.
I was on the floor with a single bound and ran to extinguish the candles burning in two silver candlesticks on the table. At once all the lights went down, the chandeliers and footlights as well. A single broad beam of moonlight shone through the open window upon the corpse.
I took my cape from the bed, the great black cape in which I was accustomed to envelop myself, and completely covered Natte's body. Then I knelt beside her in silence.
Motionless, she was as of marble. The black cape covered her entirely. The head alone was visible, its black hair gleaming, the ageing face amidst dazzling hair, pallid beneath the moonlight which poured, almost greenish, through the window.
The effect was tragic.
One thing was visible, only one...
The sallow complexion of the brunette past her prime...

[La peau verdâtre de la brune un peu mûre...]  
RAYMOND ROUSSEL

THE HEART

To retain its perfect freshness, keep THE HEART dry. UNLIKE similar products, THE HEART WILL EXPAND WHILE DRYING OUT. All actions performed with THE HEART are therefore definitive.

PREPARATION OF SENTIMENTS: To one measure of delirium, add 2 1/4 measures of HEART. Stir until a sentimental solution forms. Allow to stand for one night. While you sleep, the sentiment will take on the desired consistency (creamy, oily or malleable). Do not prepare more HEART than you can use immediately, since even in a short space of time it tends to cling.

IMPORTANT: THE HEART acts like a cement, so delirium must never be added to previously prepared sentiment, nor should it be 'dwelt on' too long. THE HEART hardens in two hours. Increase the dosage of HEART in the first few seconds if you desire a sentiment with a firmer consistency.

THE HEART casts a self-satisfied glow over generous and kind individuals.

When applied to meaner personalities however (especially if allowed to penetrate the whole being) it tends to be dissipated throughout the pores and becomes totally transparent.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

Using the style and format of the Directions to be found on the labels of household products, D.I.Y. kits and other ordinary items, apply them to items that do not require such instructions. The following examples are all by Jean-Claude Silbermann.
THE GREAT MYSTERY

DIRECTIONS:
For Middle-aged or Young Novices
With the addition of platitudes, apply THE GREAT MYSTERY, ensuring the spirit is well steeped in it, and store away in a dark place.

Leave the novice for at least twenty or thirty years to dry out, or until all his opinions are fully blackened. His spirit should then be a mottled grey colour. If whitish marks appear, due to an excess of salt, it is possible to remove them by rubbing lightly with whatever comes to mind. If lumps appear, brush to revive and make a second local application.

The novice is then in a position to begin speechifying, employing all the words customarily used for external purposes. Instead of speaking directly he can use a protective screen. Our screen (colourless or black) may be used indefinitely.

WARNING Stains resulting from THE GREAT MYSTERY coming into contact with daily life must be removed immediately with running water.

For Elderly novices a preliminary scrub with the wire-brush of cynicism is necessary to remove scales and as many prejudices as possible.

DEATH

Its combination of instantaneous and eternal action ensures that DEATH is absolutely harmless to man or mammals.

DEATH DOES NOT STAIN

DIRECTIONS
Remove the self-preserving seal, hold DEATH vertically, valve upwards, and apply by pressing the stopper.

For heart complaints: Use DEATH centre-stage. A few seconds only is sufficient.

For gambling debts, dishonour, tedium vitae etc.: Apply DEATH liberally around the edges of the room, near skirting-boards, in cracks in the floor, in any dark cranny. Repeat every four to five hours.

For mystical ecstasy: Use DEATH having placed yourself approximately one metre from clothing, curtains, carpets.

DEATH can be used in wardrobes and wall-cupboards. Shut them immediately after each application.

DEATH is recommended in Spring, from April onwards. DEATH IS GOOD FOR YOU.
NON-TOXIC.
It is not to be despised, in my opinion, if, after gazing fixedly at a spot on the wall, coals in the grate, clouds, a flowing stream, if one remembers some of their aspects, and if you look at them carefully you will discover some quite admissable inventions. Of these the genius of the painter may take full advantage, to compose battles of men and animals, landscapes or monsters, devils and other fantastic things...  

LEONARDO DA VINCI (Treatise on Painting)

How to Open at Will the Window onto the Most Beautiful Landscapes in the World and Elsewhere.

ANDRÉ BRETON (on Decalcomania)

MANIPULATING CHANCE

AUTOMATIC DRAWING

As with automatic writing, put yourself in a receptive frame of mind, draw without thinking, and avoid conscious control over the image. Keeping your pencil on the paper can help the flow.  

In fact, automatic drawing is a sort of accelerated or intensified doodling, in which unexpected and unpredictable images can be made to appear, and used as the basis for further visual play.

THE PURPOSE OF SURREALIST VISUAL TECHNIQUES IS TO OPEN A WINDOW ONTO THE MARVELLOUS THAT LIES CONCEALED BEHIND THE EVERYDAY. THIS REVELATION CAN BE ACHIEVED BY DIFFERENT MEANS: BY MANIPULATING MATERIALS, OR BY PLAY WITH IMAGES, WHETHER GIVEN OR FOUND.

THE FIRST CATEGORY OF TECHNIQUES INCLUDES THOSE THAT ARE ESSENTIALLY AUTOMATIC; THES.: 'FREEZE' CHANCE EVENTS IN WHATSOEVER MEDIUM IS BEING USED, TO CREATE ARTIFICIALLY LEONARDO'S 'BLOTS' AND 'CLOUDS', AND IN THIS WAY THEY PROVOKE SPONTANEOUS IMAGES FREE OF CONSCIOUS INTENTION. ONCE THESE IMAGES APPEAR THEY CAN BE ELABORATED; IN MARCEL JEAN'S WORDS, THEY PROVIDE 'THE POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR POETIC HALLUCINATION'. INTO THE SECOND CATEGORY FALL VARIOUS METHODS OF DIRECTLY RE-INTERPRETING EXISTING IMAGES TO PRODUCE NEW, MORE PROVOCATIVE OR BEAUTIFUL VISIONS, DELIRIOUS AND MONSTROUS AMALGAMATIONS.
FUMAGE

A method of creating images or effects by passing paper or canvas over a smoking candle or petroleum lamp. The image is then fixed and perhaps worked on.
RE-ASSEMBLING REALITY

COLLAGE
Collage, sticking together cut-out images, takes various forms within the scope of this book.

'SURREALIST COLLAGE'
Max Ernst invented this method of pasting together fragments of given or found pictures. By using images that already had a similar 'look' (principally engravings illustrating novels, magazines and technical or commercial publications) he was able to create 'illusionistic' new pictures—bizarre, fantastic, dream-like, ironic or grotesque.

MAX ERNST

MAX ERNST, Open Your Bag, My Good Man
ALAIN JOUBERT, Freud Discovers the Libido
62

JINDRICH STYRSKY, Baby Jesus, 1941
63
THE EXQUISITE CORPSE

For three or more players.

This, the most celebrated Surrealist game of all, is based on the same principle as that of the written 'exquisite corpse'. Its parlour game equivalent is Heads, Bodies and Legs in English and Petits Papiers in France.

Each player receives a sheet of paper and folds it into equal sections, as many as there are players, and usually with the lines horizontal to the proposed picture. The sheets are smoothed out and each player draws whatever he will in the top section, allowing the lines to cross the crease by a few millimetres. The sheet is then refolded back onto this crease to conceal the drawing and passed to the next player who begins the next section from these lines. And so on, until the last section, when it is unfolded and the result revealed.

(The sheet may be passed back for the first player to furnish it with a title before the picture is revealed.)