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Julian Jason Haladyn

With art … the finitude of the sensible material becomes a support for the production of affects and precepts which tend to become more and more eccentred with respect to preformed structures and coordinates. Marcel Duchamp declared: “art is a road which leads towards regions which are not governed by time and space.” – Felix Guattari (1)

In his polemic text “The Creative Act,” Marcel Duchamp describes the act of creating art as consisting of a dialogue between the two poles (as he terms them) of the artist – the creator of the work – and the spectator, or more generally the posterity – the person or people who experience the work. For Duchamp, both of these subject positions are necessary in order to create a work of art, which must be seen to involve not just the making of the work but also its reception. This relationship is described most clearly in the concluding paragraph of the text, where he states: “the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act” (2). This understanding of art undermines the privileged position typically accorded the artist within modernity, who is most often perceived as the singular creator or “genius” behind great works of art. By suggesting that artists actively depend on the contributions of viewers in order for their work to be *completed*, Duchamp directly challenges the authority of artists over their art – and, by extension, the modern conception of art based upon this vision of the “genius” artist.

At the heart of Duchamp’s short text is, I propose, a

fundamental questioning of the accepted parameters of the artist-viewer relationship that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century with the modern conception of art and the museum. Whereas prevailing modernist theories assume the artist to be a position of privilege, marking a distinct perspective on the world that is the basic expression of their uniqueness or “genius” — a perspective that defines everything the artist produces precisely because it is produced by the artist — Duchamp’s vision of art is fundamentally based upon the relational interactions or dialogues of viewer and artwork, with the artist’s participation being *mediumistic*. “If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist,” he tells us, “we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the esthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it” (3). Duchamp clarifies this position in an interview with Pierre Cabanne, where he states:

I believe very strongly in the “medium” aspect of the artist. The artist makes something, then one day, he is recognized by the intervention of the public, of the spectator; so later he goes on to posterity. You can’t stop that, because, in brief, it’s a product of two poles — there’s the pole of the one who makes the work, and the pole of the one who looks at it. I give the latter as much importance as the one who makes it. (4)

Rather than creating an artwork that is experienced by a spectator after it is completed, in Duchamp’s description the artist is positioned as a *medium* that produces works of art only *with* the participation of the spectator and, more important, the posterity (multiple spectators in multiple contexts) that historically recognizes the work as art. What Duchamp proposes is a dialogic artist-viewer relationship that is predicated on a psychological and affective *transference*, an important term he uses to describe the interaction between artist and spectator — and, in the more historical interpretation, between the past and present — through the

material presence of the art object.

The purpose of my present text is two-fold. First, to argue for the significance of “The Creative Act” within modern artistic and cultural discourse, specifically examining Duchamp’s act of defining the relational subject positions of the artist and spectator that form the basis for his theory of art – which, I propose, can be applied to a more general consideration of the psychology of modern subjectivity. Second, to analyze Duchamp’s use of the word “transference” when he defines the workings of the creative act and to situate this Duchampian transference, a psychological notion based on subjective dialogue, in relation to the psychoanalytic understanding of the term. In this way my analysis approaches “The Creative Act” psychologically, considering the text primarily as a statement on art, not as an esoteric practice or discipline but rather as the basis of and material for a continuing artistic dialogue that takes place through the artist-artwork-viewer relationship.

Creating the Creative Act

It may be helpful to begin by outlining the circumstances in which Duchamp wrote and presented “The Creative Act,” an aspect of the text that is often overlooked. As one of only a few documents in which Duchamp clearly describes his understanding of the process of creating art – one might even say his philosophy of art – it is important that we consider the (practical) development of this text especially as it relates to and even reflects his practice as an artist.

In 1957, Duchamp was invited to give a talk at the American Federation of the Arts Convention in Houston, Texas. His acceptance of this invitation was likely motivated at least in part by the fact that the exhibition *Jacques Villon, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Marcel Duchamp* was on view at The Museum of Fine Arts of Houston during this convention. Organized by James Johnson Sweeney, director of the Guggenheim, where the

show was first presented, this exhibition brought together works by Duchamp and his two brothers – hence, it is often referred to as the “Three Brothers” exhibition. As Calvin Tomkins suggests, Duchamp was no doubt encouraged by Sweeney and “may have felt under some obligation to help promote” the exhibition (5). The show was of considerable importance to Duchamp, who actively participated in its planning as well as the design of the catalogue. His talk would in this way greatly aid in promoting the “Three Brothers,” the opening of which (on the evening of April 3) was included on the schedule of activities for the convention (6). Duchamp presented his paper on the morning of April 5 as part of a panel discussion that included Professor William Seitz (Art History, Princeton University), Professor Rudolf Arnheim (Psychology, Sarah Lawrence College), and Gregory Bateson (anthropologist). The topic for this panel was the creative act, with the title being directly adapted by Duchamp as the title of his paper – which was published in *Art News* the same year.

The approach that Duchamp takes in “The Creative Act” builds upon and extends his earlier theories of the role of the artist in society that he discussed at the Western Round Table on Modern Art, which took place at the San Francisco Museum of Art in 1949 (7). Duchamp proposes two key ideas during the four sessions of the roundtable.

The first is the concept of what he terms the *esthetic echo*, which he compares to the notion of aesthetic taste:

Taste gives a sensuous feeling, not an esthetic emotion. Taste presupposes a domineering onlooker who dictates what he likes and dislikes, and translates it into beautiful and ugly when he is sensuously pleased or displeased. Quite differently, the “victim” of an esthetic echo is in a position comparable to that of a man in love or of a believer, who dismisses automatically his demanding ego and helplessly submits to a pleasurable and mysterious constraint. While exercising his taste, he adopts a commanding attitude, when touched by the

esthetic revelation, the same man, almost in an ecstatic mood, becomes receptive and humble.… the man of taste trusts his pre-established likes and dislikes. The man who gets the esthetic shock — it's a shock — is not master of himself. He submits and becomes humble (8).

The distinction Duchamp is suggesting between taste and the *esthetic echo* hinges on a question of the spectator's subjective will, specifically whether or not an artwork is viewed passively or actively. Most people, according to Duchamp, respond to an artwork in a manner that generally conforms to preconceived interpretations, which often consist of culturally accepted opinions or shared perspectives (uncritically) reproduced by the viewer; this is what is meant by *taste* — which for Kant allows people a common means of judging and making communicable their subjective responses within a larger community. With taste, therefore, will is not a necessary component since one's initial response of *like* or *dislike* is trusted. To experience the *esthetic echo*, however, the spectator must give up any *commanding attitude* over the artwork and actively be willing to engage in a dialogue with it, creating receptiveness beyond the mere apprehension of the work. Here Duchamp envisions the act of viewing as the possibility of using one's will to create meanings that are not given.

The second major idea that Duchamp introduces at the 1949 roundtable is his belief that the artist and artwork must be treated as separate, a notion that — even after the Poststructuralist critique of the author — remains challenging to this day. Responding to a discussion about the artist's recognition of when a work is complete, Duchamp adds: "We don't emphasize enough that the work of art is independent of the artist. The work of art lives by itself and the artist who happened to make it is like an irresponsible medium. No artist can say at any time 'I am a genius. I am going to paint a masterpiece.' That is not done" (9). In this articulation of

the artist as an *irresponsible medium* we can see the starting point for the main themes of "The Creative Act," in which Duchamp presents a more focused argument for the *mediumistic* (as he terms it) quality of the artist and, by extension, his conception of the artwork as a creative experience that is distinct from the person who created it – a distinction that he leaves for the spectator to reconcile. For Duchamp, the artist cannot be responsible for what becomes of the artwork – how it may be interpreted or understood, whether it is appreciated or not – once it is sent out into the world, not unlike the idea that a medium such as paint or marble is not responsible for a painting or sculpture produced out of its materials.

It is important to note that Duchamp's proposed view of the artist as an *irresponsible medium* is not simply an abstract theory but instead emerged directly out of his own experience as an artist. As Tomkins points out, there existed for Duchamp a "notable gap between his own intentions and the end results" of his various artistic projects, the eventual significance of which, from an art historical perspective, has little to nothing to do with Duchamp's *intentions* – what W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley characterize as "the intentional fallacy" (10). This gap can be seen in the events surrounding his painting *Nude Descending a Staircase*, No. 2 (1912), which, after its scandalous success in the 1913 "International Exhibition of Modern Art" or (as it is better known) the "Armory Show" in New York City, represented a key turning point in his career. When this same painting was submitted a year before to the 1912 Salon des Indépendants it was regarded so poorly that his brothers, on behalf of the organizers, asked him to change the painting, which he instead withdrew from the exhibit – the entire demoralizing event precipitated his trip to Munich from June to October. Even after the work's subsequent inclusion that same year in an exhibition of Cubist work at Galerie Dalmau in Barcelona and the "Section d'Or" exhibition in Paris, the painting was still not considered to

be of much artistic importance in comparison to the innovativeness of his contemporaries. The American response to *Nude Descending a Staircase*, No. 2 was a surprise to Duchamp, who would not realize his own success as an artist until his visit to New York in 1915 – a status he did not experience in France until much later and arguably never to the extent as in the United States (11). What was the difference between the painting that was "refused by the Indépendants" and "didn't cause a stir" at Galerie Dalmau or in *Section d'*Or and the painting that became the *succès de scandale* of the *Armory Show* (12)? Through this discrepancy, Duchamp experienced first-hand how *irresponsible* his intentions as the work's creator were in its reception.

On its most basic level, "The Creative Act" is Duchamp's recognition and articulation of this gap between the artist's *intentions* and the end result of the work as experienced by the spectator (and posterity). He defines the experiential discrepancy between these positions as the personal *art coefficient*, which can be seen "in the chain of reactions accompanying the creative act" in which we can witness "the relation between the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed." He continues: "To avoid a misunderstanding, we must remember that this 'art coefficient' is a personal expression of art 'à l'état brut,' that is, still in a raw state, which must be 'refined' as pure sugar from molasses, by the spectator" (13). The emphasis on the spectator's role as *refiner* of the raw artistic product of the artist serves to clarify the distinction Duchamp is highlighting, particularly in terms of understanding different receptions of a work of art by different groups of people – and, as was the case with *Nude Descending a Staircase*, No. 2, to radically different ends. (No one interpretation is correct or incorrect, according to Duchamp, although he makes it clear that posterity provides what he calls the *final verdict*.) From his own experience as an artist Duchamp recognized that judging works of art is ultimately and almost exclusively the

responsibility of the spectator, with the artist becoming a type of *medium* out of or through which the work is created (14). The different and even contradictory responses elicited by an artwork represent the overdetermined nature of the creative act, which, as Duchamp came to see it, necessarily involved a dialogic relationship between the artist (as *medium*) and spectator through the work of art.

The significance of Duchamp's conception of the artist as *mediumistic* cannot in my opinion be overemphasized, especially when considered not just a theory of art but also a theoretical critique of modern notions of authorship – and the modern subject more generally. In fact, with "The Creative Act" Duchamp anticipates the Poststructuralist interrogation of the author performed most powerfully in Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" and Michel Foucault's "What Is an Author?" (published in 1967 and 1969 respectively). Let us therefore examine "The Creative Act" in relation to two key areas of overlap: first, Barthes' and Duchamp's critical shifts in focus from the authority of the author to that of the reader-spectator; second, the manner in which Foucault and Duchamp divide or split the role of the "author" and "artist" (respectively) to challenge the perceived unity given to the author-artist position in modernity. In addition to explicitly connecting Duchamp's analysis of the artist with the examinations of the author performed by Bathes and Foucault, an important goal of this comparison is to locate Duchamp's ideas within the larger critical investigation of the *author question* that pervades twentieth century discourse, a category of inquiry in which (surprisingly) "The Creative Act" is not typically examined.

The Birth of the Reader-Spectator

In "The Death of the Author," Barthes questions the significance of the author's role in understanding or approaching a text. His critique focuses on the manner in which the author is used as a *given* in the reading of a text,

treated as the natural origin or source that the reader is supposed to uncover in order to experience the "true" meaning of the work. "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing," Barthes tells us (15). Earlier in the essay he notes that this overt focus on the author as a key interpretive position is a distinctly modern way of examining texts, pointing to (but not explicating) the history of interpretation that pre-dates the nineteenth century. M. H. Abrams describes this development in his influential *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition:*

The pragmatic orientation, ordering the aim of the artist and the character of the work to the nature, the needs, and the springs of pleasure in the audience, characterized by far the greatest part of criticism from the time of Horace through the eighteenth century…. Gradually, however, the stress was shifted more and more to the poet's [author's] natural genius, creative imagination, and emotional spontaneity, at the expense of the opposing attributes of judgment, learning, and artful restraints. As a result the audience gradually receded into the background, giving place to the poet himself, and his mental powers and emotional need, as the predominant cause and even the end and test of art. (16)

It is this shift of orientation from audience to author that Barthes objects to, proposing a form of reversal in which it is the author who is required to recede into the background of a text, giving place to the audience or reader *as the predominant cause and even the end and test of art*. Or, as Barthes dramatically proclaims in the final statement of his essay, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (17).

In spite of the forcefulness of his title, the main target of Barthes' critique is not strictly speaking the role of the "author" (as writer or creator of a text) – a role that he

necessarily participates in and even celebrates and enjoys throughout his writing – but rather with the excessive privileging of the author's authority over the text. At no point is this "death" equated with the elimination or disappearance of the author position, in theory or practice; what disappears is the privileged autonomy associated with the role of the author in modernity. Barthes replaces the designation "author" with what he terms the *scriptor*, which, although it excludes the "passions, humours, feelings, impressions" – that is, the personal or subjective qualities of the writer – typically associated with the Romantic vision of the author (as genius or *author-god*), still maintains a similar position in relation to the text (18). Even a cursory examination of his substitution of "scriptor" for "author" demonstrates this overlap since, quite literally, scriptor is the Latin word for a writer, scribe, or author; beginning in his 1953 *Writing Degree Zero*, Barthes uses this alternative categorization to describe the act of writing in which the writer can no longer claim presence within what is written. He is therefore not removing or killing the author, as commentators often claim (19), but instead is proposing an understanding of authorship that is again more akin to a pre-nineteenth century orientation that privileges the reader's relation to the text. In the most extreme interpretation, Barthes' scriptor is an author reduced to the function of a scribe or copyist that merely re-produces texts by drawing upon an *immense dictionary* of existing or ready-made cultural material, as a result of which there is no claim to personal expression or originality.

Here we can see a direct parallel between Barthes' conception of the author as *scriptor* and Duchamp's description of the artist as *medium*. In both cases there is an active de-privileging of the modernist authorial relation between the author-artist and their work, which is replaced by a renewed focus on the reader-spectator's authority in *disentangling*, making sense of and even completing the text. This is made

clear by Duchamp's assertion that the spectator contributes to the creation of a work of art by *interpreting its inner qualifications*; and by Barthes, who in S/Z states: "What is at stake in literary work (in literature as work) is making the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of a text" (20). For Duchamp and Barthes the role of the reader-spectator is vital to addressing the *author question*, the critical evaluation of which depends upon understanding a text not just as the product of an author-artist but also, and more important, as a social space or language (textual or visual) that invites engagement (present and future).

The specific position granted the reader-spectator in relation to the text, however, is quite different in each of their two accounts. On the one hand, Duchamp argues that the spectator (or posterity) is responsible for the final evaluation and interpretation of what an artist creates, locating spectators within the creative process by making them the determining factors – particularly through the shared experience of multiple spectators – in the social and historical constitution of a work of art. As he states: "The creative act takes another aspect when the spectator experiences the phenomenon of transmutation; through the change from inert matter into a work of art, an actual transubstantiation has taken place, and the role of the spectator is to determine the weight of the work on the asthetic scale" (21). The power of the Duchampian spectator is in this way directly based upon an aesthetics of subjective judgment, with individual spectators being called upon to interpret and share what they experience. On the other hand, Barthes clearly disavows the manifestly subjective aspects of the reader (as person) and instead proposes the birth of a position that quite literally *structures* the received text, which is experienced most fully by readers who deny their own (as well as the author's) pathological interest in order to engage with the text in-itself. According to Barthes:

The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. (22)

Barthes' reader occupies the fundamental position in which the *multi-dimensional* aspects of a text are given *unity*, the result not of an individual reader's subjective experience but rather the act of being the text's destination. The distinction between "The Death of the Author" and "The Creative Act" can in this way be summed up as follows. While Barthes depersonalizes the role of the reader-spectator, which he declares is without *history, biography* and most significantly *psychology*, Duchamp celebrates the subjective abilities of reader-spectators to engage in a personal dialogue with a text, deciphering it through acts of individual judgment.

On an historical level, it is important to acknowledge the fact that "The Death of the Author" was first published in the 1967 double issue of the American journal Aspen, no. 5/6, designed and edited by Brian O'Doherty. In place of a traditional bound publication, O'Doherty produced a white box containing a series of loose texts (in the most general sense of the term), a format that, as he – or, more accurately, his pseudonym Sigmund Bode – writes, "constitutes a test for the reader" (23). Translated into English by Richard Howard, Barthes' text was printed as an eight-inch square pamphlet that also included essays by George Kubler and Susan Sontag. While planning *Aspen*, no. 5/6, O'Doherty contacted Barthes about contributing to the project:

Barthes was in Philadelphia at that time and he came to New York to talk about the project. He got it immediately. My notion that art, writing etc., was produced by a kind of anti-

self that had nothing to do with whoever "me" was, an excellent preparation for our conversation. He said "I think I may have something for you." When "The Death of the Author" arrived, I knew it was revolutionary. (24)

Written (at least in part) for *Aspen*, no. 5/6 – with the more often cited French version appearing the following year in the journal *Mantéia* – Barthes' text reflects the critical issues of authorship that are enacted through the dialogic interplay of materials in this box. The significance of Barthes writing "The Death of the Author" for this project is heightened when we consider that it appears alongside an audio recording of Duchamp reading "The Creative Act" (presented on one of several records found in the box). Given O'Doherty's overall interest in Duchamp and his work, as well as the obvious parallels between *Aspen*, no. 5/6 and Duchamp's *Box-in-a-Valise* (1935-41), it is more than likely that Barthes was (or became) aware of "The Creative Act" when he wrote "The Death of the Author."

Questioning the Author-Artist

Following in the wake of Barthes' text is the presentation of Foucault's influential lecture "What Is an Author?" at the Collège de France in 1969, which he published as an essay the same year in *Bulletin de la Société Français de Philosophie*. Similar to "The Death of the Author," Foucault's essay confronts the overt privileging of the author's authority over the text within modernity. But where Barthes focuses on articulating a *death* or disappearance of the author in order to refocus discussion on the significance of the reader – formulating a type of either/or – Foucault actively draws attention back to the (admittedly) problematized authorial position or function, examining what he terms the *author-function*:

It is obviously insufficient to repeat empty slogans: the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death.

Rather, we should re-examine the empty space left by the author's disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance. (25)

Here we see a subtle acknowledgement of Barthes' text, which Foucault critiques by inferring that the "death of the author" is an *empty slogan*. While accepting the basic premise that the author (in the modernist sense) is no longer at the center of a given text or group of texts, this disappearance for Foucault is not the end of the *author question* but instead represents his point of departure for examining a simple yet vital problem: what is it that occupies the position once reserved for the author? No longer the end and test of art (to borrow Abrams' description), the term "author" has become an *open question* in relation to the text that is understood at one and the same time as the author's and not the author's – a contradiction that Foucault makes clear from the outset he recognizes in his own writing, grounding his analysis in a subjective framework.

This problematic can be described quite simply as a splitting of the author into two distinct roles: the individual who is responsible for the actual creation of a specific text and the authorial identity that, typically associated with a name, is used to designate the role of the text's creator. In the first case we are talking about an individual who makes (physically and/or conceptually) a text, the author as person – for example, the "Michel Foucault" who wrote "What Is an Author?" among other texts, who was born in 1926 and died in 1984. In the second case we are referring to the functioning persona associated with the text, the "figure who is outside and precedes" the text and yet the "text apparently points to" – the "Michel Foucault" whose name, no longer tied to the life of the individual, historically authenticates "What Is an Author?" (26). Foucault's concept of the *author-function*

critically references this historical persona, what in Lacanian terms can be called the real author that gives authority and unity to a text on the level of history, a position that must be regarded as separate from the *reality* of the author who happens to have written the text. It is the often assumed correlation between these two roles, if not the outright and unquestioned belief in their similitude, that Foucault challenges through his examination of "the 'author' as a function of discourse," a rational entity constructed around the (judicial) need for authority within modernity (27).

The division of the authorial position into personal and functional roles serves to highlight the inherent contradiction in the modern conception of the author-artist. If a person – and here we need to remember the consistent modernist claims (including Duchamp's) that everyone can be or is an artist – were to actually embody and enact all of the qualities associated with the designation "author" or "artist," this combination of (psychological) demands would foster what can only be described as a schizophrenic subjectivity. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari articulate a vision of this (irrational) entity in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia:* "The schizophrenic is the universal producer. There is no need to distinguish here between producing and its product" (28). Interestingly enough, the framework of the book reflects this approach, which Foucault in his preface notes is informed "by seemingly abstract notions of multiplicities, flows, arrangements, and connections" that are best read and understood as an "art" (29). Such a play with language, in which contradictions are embraced rather than avoided or resolved, raises serious questions about the authority of the author-artist and by extension the authenticity or autonomy of the text as a source of (intrinsic) meaning.

In different but complimentary ways, Foucault and Duchamp each

enact this playfulness by approaching language – which we will consider for now in the restricted sense of written language – not as a transparent medium of expression but rather as an open discursive space that is, as Foucault poetically writes, “an attempt to exhaust language” (30). We see this particularly in the authors Foucault chooses to focus on, which prominently include Friedrich Hölderlin, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Raymond Roussel – Duchamp notably sharing an interest in Roussel – as well as in the development of his archaeological method of analysis that, stated simply, treats language as a stratified space into which we can *dig*. Duchamp’s use of language similarly serves not to clarify or describe but rather to carry the mind “towards other regions more verbal”; while specifically addressing the short texts he often inscribed on his readymades, this statement also speaks to his propensity for giving works complex or (to use Guillaume Apollinaire’s term) *intellectual* titles as well as his general interest in notes and puns (31). In both Foucault’s writing and Duchamp’s artistic practice, language – and here I propose we can extend its parameters to include not just written or spoken but also visual language – is an opportunity to make visible the contradictory functioning of the author-artist, a conflicted position that remains defined by its pathological need to exceed or even transcend itself (as seen throughout avant-garde practices).

For Duchamp, the schizophrenic quality of the modern author-artist is, as stated earlier, not just a theory but rather represents a philosophy of art developed directly out of his first-hand experience as a practicing artist. While the catalyst for Duchamp’s critique of the (privileged) role of the artist is likely the radically different responses to *Nude Descending a Staircase*, No. 2, it is the invention of the readymade that most powerfully manifests his critical perspective. To begin with, the term “readymade” should not be treated as a rigid artistic categorization that is seen as unifying all artworks under its banner but instead must, I

propose, be understood as describing a (particularly modern) theoretical or philosophical artistic discourse (32). This is precisely why, as Thierry de Duve tells us, Duchamp's "readymades are easily annexed by the deconstructionists as a proof of irrelevance or obsolescence with regards to the notion of authorship" – and why the art historical treatment of the readymade as an artistic (rather than philosophical) gesture ironically serves to strengthen the authorial role of the artist, of Duchamp's in particular (33). The challenge posed by *Fountain* (1917), for example, is not simply the fact that it questions the categorical space of "art" but rather that, by taking the authority of the author-artist – and the institutionalization of this authority – *too* seriously, it makes visible inherent contradictions in the modernist discourse of art. Through the artist's act of choosing an already-made and undifferentiated object, the readymade functions as "art" because it is, in Foucaultian terms, strategically situated in the *breach* separating the two roles of the author-artist, within the space opened by art historical discourse – the object, in this case a urinal, being experienced at one and the same time as a *priori* and a *posteriori*. (Or, following Deleuze and Guattari, as a lack of distinction between *producing and its product* .) We can even go so far as to call the readymade a schizophrenic form of art that is consistently involved with its own conflicted and contradictory character, a condition inaugurated through an exaggerated split between the psychology of the artist as (absent) person and the artist as a functioning discursive presence (as *medium*).

Here the overlap between Foucault's conception of the *author-function* and Duchamp's arguments for the *mediumistic* qualities of the artist can be seen most notably in their shared critique of the assumed singular or immediate unity attributed to the position of the modernist author-artist. "The author," according to Foucault,

constitutes a principle of unity in writing where any unevenness of production is ascribed to changes caused by evolution, maturation, or outside influence. In addition, the author serves to neutralize the contradictions that are found in a series of texts. Governing this function is the belief that there must be – at a particular level of an author's thought, of his conscious or unconscious desire – a point where contradictions are resolved, where the incompatible elements can be shown to relate to one another or to cohere around a fundamental and originating contradiction. (34)

This forced unity, which results from a failure to distinguish between the author as person or individual and the author as *author-function*, is a means of establishing the vision of a complete and autonomous discourse that is at one and the same time supported by and serves to demonstrate a stable site of subjectivity within modern culture. By arguing that the author is a function of discourse – rather than the other way around – Foucault undermines the perceived unity and authority of the "author" (or "artist"), which, rather than referring to a *real* individual, becomes a space that "simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy" (35). Without its unifying principle, however, the author-artist becomes little more then a *mediumistic being* that, as Duchamp notes, is not conscious of what is being created or why – a task that is instead entrusted to the reader-spectator, whose role is to *accept* or judge the "social value" of an artist-author's work (36). This is a key consequence of giving the attributes of a *medium* to the author-artist: recognizing that the person who creates a text cannot occupy the *author-function* and therefore should be treated as separate from their work.

Duchampian Transference

The question becomes: if the artist is not wholly responsible for the creation of art, but is dependent upon the spectator's engagement with the work, what is the means by which these two

positions are able to fulfill the creative process? Duchamp similarly asks, if the artist "plays no role at all in the judgment of his own work, how can one describe the phenomenon which prompts the spectator to react critically to the work of art? In other words, how does this reaction come about?" His answer is quite significant: "This phenomenon is comparable to a transference from the artist to the spectator in the form of an esthetic osmosis taking place through the inert matter, such as pigment, piano or marble" (37). Of particular interest is his use of the term "transference" to describe the process of exchange between artist and spectator through the object of the artwork. This word choice can be read in two different but not mutually exclusive ways: first, the common usage in which one is referring to the act of *transferring* something and, second, the psychoanalytic understanding that describes the psychological process by which feelings, emotions, and even memories are unconsciously *transferred* or projected from one person onto another, typically an analyst in the clinical setting. (And, given his propensity for puns and other playful forms of using language, it is likely that both meanings are being employed simultaneously.) The aim of this final section is to consider the implications of Duchamp's notion of transference within the process of the creative act, specifically as it relates to and extends the psychological and affective territories of psychoanalytic thought. Before considering this Duchampian transference – as I describe his particular approach – it is important that we first establish a basic understanding of transference as a concept.

"What are transferences?" Sigmund Freud writes in Dora: *An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, "They are new editions or facsimiles of the tendencies and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the process of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity, which is characteristic of their species, that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician" (38). Published in 1905, this early formulation proposes transference as a form of resistance to

the analytic process on the part of the person being analyzed (the analysand), with the working through of the transference – by making oneself conscious of feelings or emotions rather than projecting them – representing a (potential) breakthrough in the analysis. An often-cited example is when patients transfer feelings of love onto their analyst, thereby stopping the analytic process until such time that this love can be recognized as belonging to a different object; this moment of conscious realization is for Freud a (if not *the*) cornerstone of psychoanalytic practice. Since its introduction, the concept of transference has continued to explore and extend as a tool of analysis and, more significantly for our purposes, as a more general operation that Melanie Klein suggests is evident "throughout life and influences all human relations" (39). It is through this expanded understanding of transference as a relational phenomenon applicable to everyday *human relations* that the concept, no longer restricted to the clinical setting, is able to be used as a vital concept for addressing the intersubjective exchanges that take place throughout modern life – with the relation of the author-artist and reader-spectator being a particular subset of this form of cultural analysis.

In the fourth chapter of *Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp*, Amelia Jones discusses Duchamp's work through a psychoanalytic consideration of his (uncertain and *chaotically* eroticized) *author-function*, emphasizing the way his work plays out the relational qualities of transference through the creative exchange between artist and spectator via the artwork – which she treats as analogous to the clinical relationship of the analyst and analysand. Her (admittedly Lacanian) description of "transference" provides a valuable perspective on how we can approach Duchamp's use of the term: "transference – this site where the struggle for meaning takes place via the spoken or written text that 'represents' the subject under analysis – is also the psychic site where both the analyst and analysand are constituted, in relation to each

other, as meaningful subjects" (40). This definition characterizes transference as an *enunciative* space, both representational and psychic, in which the subjective *struggle* for *meaning* is articulated through two interconnected relationships. The first is the relation of the reader-spectator to the text being examined, with the reader-spectator performing a role similar to that of an analyst and the text being the subject under analysis. The second is the relation of the reader-spectator to the author-artist, with the author-artist in this case playing the role of analyst to the reader-spectator that is now in the position of the analysand.

Jones clarifies the workings of these two relationships by discussing, in a notably psychoanalytic tone, how she (as a spectator) personally functions within these relational positions when viewing the work of Duchamp. As the interpreter of his artworks, Jones notes that she is "the analyst and Duchamp is the narrative I produce from his enunciative 'symptoms' as meaningful." Yet, as she continues:

I am also his analysand, subject to his texts, and he is my ego ideal. I transfer my desires and unconscious wishes onto him as authority – identifying with him so as to produce myself as full. The fantasy "Duchamp" promises to take the place of the lack for me, even as I "master" him through analysis. I interpret his works, yet they are always already interpreted by his own selections, the "secondary revisions" of enunciative production…. I make the attempt to master him so I can submit myself to his mastery: We are, so to speak, in a reciprocal dialectic of analytic transference. (41)

In this manner Jones reads her encounter with his work as a dual act of relational subjection in which she at one and the same time is constituted by and constitutes Duchamp's work, a process that she directly compares to *analytic transference*. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that Jones re-frames the parameters of the transference relationship using

Duchamp's notion of the *creative act*. As she reveals through her analysis, the creative transference enacted in the artist-artwork-spectator relation is based within a series of interdependencies that are analogous to those found in the analyst-analysand relation of psychoanalytic transference; this correlation, far from drawing a mere parallel between discourses, actively demonstrates a fundamental discursive overlap on the inter-subjective or relational level.

This overlap may also account for Duchamp's subtle but significant presence in the writings of Guattari, where the readymade serves (schizophrenically) as both exemplar and foil to his aesthetic theories. We see this particularly in his *aesthetic paradigm*, a re-envisioned form of analysis in which the psychology of modern subjectivity is examined through an aesthetic (rather than scientific) lens, a methodology that for Guattari, as Stephen Zepke observes, begins with the readymade – making "Duchamp the harbinger of a re-vitalized creative act" (42). Treated as both aesthetic and political, the readymade is seen as a language of creative enunciation that functions through an authorial and psychological *refrain*, privileging not the "origin" of a particular act, event or object but rather the complex subjective affects and emotions – what Guattari describes as a *constellation of universes* – that result from the relational interactions that the readymade facilitates. Here again we see evidence of the shared territory between clinical and cultural transferences, with art representing a key modern form of subjective creativity that Guattari actively incorporates into the realm of psychology on both theoretical – through his critical re-thinking of psychoanalysis – and practical – through his work as an analyst – means. For this reason his conception of transference is quite telling: no longer conceived as a dual relation between two subjects, Guattari views transference as (at minimum) a triangular relation that also includes a mediating object that functions as an ambiguous *medium* (43). Is not the readymade the ultimate (creative) expression of a

mediating object?

Jones also employs the readymade as a major instance of transference within Duchamp’s work, although for her it is the artist’s signature (in whatever form it takes) that is the *ultimate* site of the transferential relation. The urinal that Duchamp used in *Fountain*, for example, was part of a series of mass-produced objects that, at the time, could be found in commercial lavatory supply stores, meaning that it could be (and was) easily replaced by another of its kind with little to no difference in the overall experience of the work. The presence of a signature is therefore at odds with the inherent repeatability of a machine-made urinal, with the contradictory result of producing an individualized object that is multiple or manifold. By signing a urinal (one of many) with the pseudonym *R. Mutt* Duchamp makes the spectator’s relationship with the work a blatantly self-conscious and problematic one by destabilizing, on the one hand, the assumed unity of the work of “art” and, on the other hand, the perceived singularity of the artist’s act of creation – with the artist, in Foucault’s terms, functioning as simultaneously the internal function of the work’s creation that precedes the urinal and the external figure to which *Fountain* points. It is the ability of the readymade, as a literal *new edition* or *facsimile* of an already-existing object, to call attention to the arbitrariness of the author-artist’s discursive authority over the artwork that is its most challenging and dangerous quality. The instability of Duchamp’s authorial “I,” which the indexical signature of the “artist” stands in for, is in this way transferred via the art object to the spectator so that, as Jones states, his “shifting ‘I’ enforces an unstable intersubjective exchange, an ongoing process of transference” (44). Rather than a singular event, the creative act is here seen as the product of a recurrent and *ongoing* repetition – another key aspect of psychoanalytic transference (45) – with the readymade making obvious the continual transferential process, active but not recognized in all works of art, by

which an object is constituted and reconstituted as “art” by each consecutive spectator who (with the help of the artist’s *author-function*) recognizes it as such.

For Duchamp the artist’s role in the creation of an artwork is a means rather than an end, the last analysis being reserved for the evaluative and interpretive acts of the spectator and, more generally, the posterity (of art history). To understand Duchamp’s conception of transference therefore requires us to appreciate his vision of art as a psychological process of dialogue, one that does not stop when the artist has completed the artwork or even when it is placed within an institution of display, but continues on to include the reception and interpretation of the work on the social level. “Don’t say that the artist is a great thinker because he produces it,” Duchamp tells Calvin Tomkins. “The artist produces nothing until the onlooker has said, ‘You have produced something marvellous.’ The onlooker has the last word on it” (46). What we see in Duchamp’s proposed creative act is therefore not just a relation of artist and spectator or spectator and artwork, but rather involves a networking of the three. To return to Jones’ description of “transference,” it is the dialogue among the permutations of the two relationships she outlines – the manner in which the reader-spectator’s analysis of the text (and by extension the *author-function*) is also the site where the reader-spectator and author-artist connection is constituted or made (historically) *real* – that most closely articulate the dynamics of Duchampian transference as described in “The Creative Act.”

Within the text we find an invaluable clue to help us contextualize, both personally and historically, Duchamp’s approach to the artist-artwork-spectator relation. Following his introduction of the two poles and his proposed attribution of the ontological status of “medium” onto the position of the artist, he calls upon T. S. Eliot’s words from “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (written in 1919) to describe what he

sees as the split roles of the artist: “The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material” (47). Eric Cameron points to the fact that this is Duchamp’s only direct quotation of a critic, making it imperative that we take this reference seriously – particularly since, in spite of the perceived polarity between his vision of art and Eliot’s, Duchamp was obviously able to see in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” something of the conflicted character of the modern position of the “artist” that spoke to him, positively or negatively, about the (most often) unacknowledged realities of creating works of art (48). In addition to the above quoted characterization of the artist, we also find in Eliot’s essay two key ideas that parallel aspects of the *creative* act as Duchamp describes the process.

The first concerns the *depersonalization* of the artist, a process of “continual self-sacrifice” or “extinction of personality” that Eliot suggests is a necessary progression by which the mind of a mature artist becomes “a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations” (49). His use of the word “medium” is especially significant given the importance of the term in Duchamp’s text. For Eliot, the expression of a (great) artist is based not on personality but rather the ability to escape one’s self, to function as a *medium* – with much of the term’s religious connotations – through which (great) works of art are created. We can see in this depersonalized vision many of the qualities that characterize Duchamp’s notion of the artist as a *mediumistic being*, with one overriding distinction. Whereas Eliot clearly believes in the artist’s privileged position, which the role of *medium* as a genius-like state beyond the individual serves to maintain, Duchamp’s proposal of giving the artist the attributes of a *medium* directly undermines the artist’s

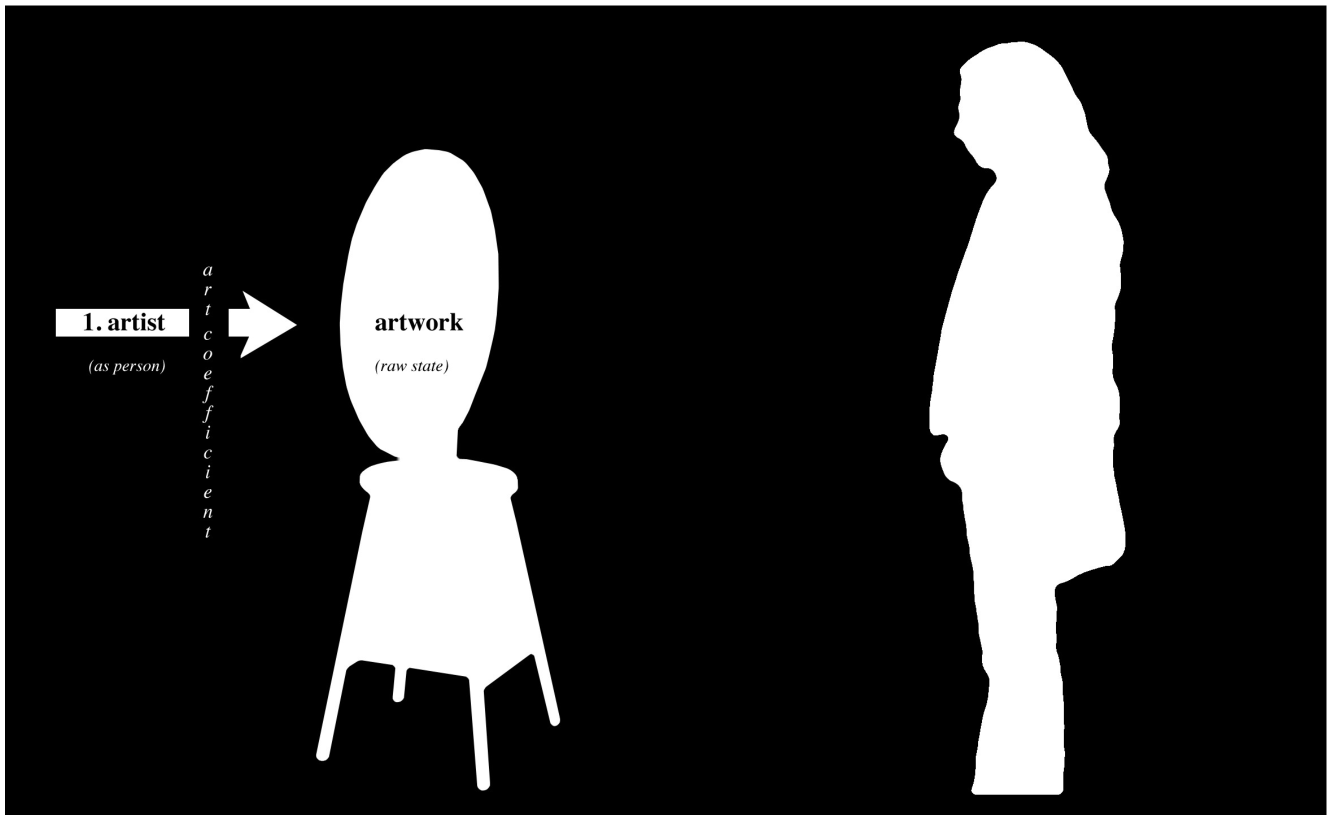
authority over the work precisely because of the disconnect between the person (who *suffers*) and the mind (that creates). In other words, while Eliot uses the term "medium" to describe a condition of higher (objective) authority that the author-artist achieves through the sacrifice of the personal – which, as he suggests, turns art towards a *condition of science* – for Duchamp the role of "medium" defines – through a (playfully) pseudo-scientific description – the unawareness or, as he worded it in the 1949 roundtable, *irresponsibility* of the author-artist in terms what is created and why. "The artist doesn't count. He does not count. Society takes what it wants," Duchamp tells Tomkins in no uncertain terms (50).

The second idea in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that is of interest to us is Eliot's *suggestive* scientific analogy in which he describes the functioning of the author-artist as catalyst, specifically comparing the process of creating art to a chemical reaction. We are invited to consider the action that takes place when oxygen and sulphur dioxide "are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nonetheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged" (51). The filament of platinum, necessarily active without either being depleted or leaving a trace of itself in the final product, represents for Eliot the ideal mind of the author-artist in the creative act. As he makes clear in the lines following this analogy – those quoted by Duchamp – the ideal or *perfect* author-artist results from the separation of the affects of personality from the (de-personalized) expression of the mind that, like the platinum, creates without leaving a trace of its *self*. We can easily apply the basic parameters of Eliot's use of this analogy to Duchamp's arguments for a creative act that is no longer defined by the authorizing presence of the artist (as the *end and test of art*), although, unlike Eliot, Duchamp would never claim that the work possesses no *trace* of the

artist. For Duchamp, the artist's personal intentions and desires (the "series of efforts, pains, satisfactions, refusals, decisions") are irrelevant to the artwork's final realization, which, like the created sulphurous acid, must be understood and judged as distinct from the artist (as person) that created it. The reason for this is because "the artist goes from intention to realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions" that, especially in terms of aesthetic choices, cannot be considered fully self-conscious and therefore must not be treated as the singular source of and for the work's meaning (52). In this manner, while the artist (as *author-function*) is the catalyst for the artwork, the actual realization of a work of art can be accomplished only through the transferential process of the creative act.

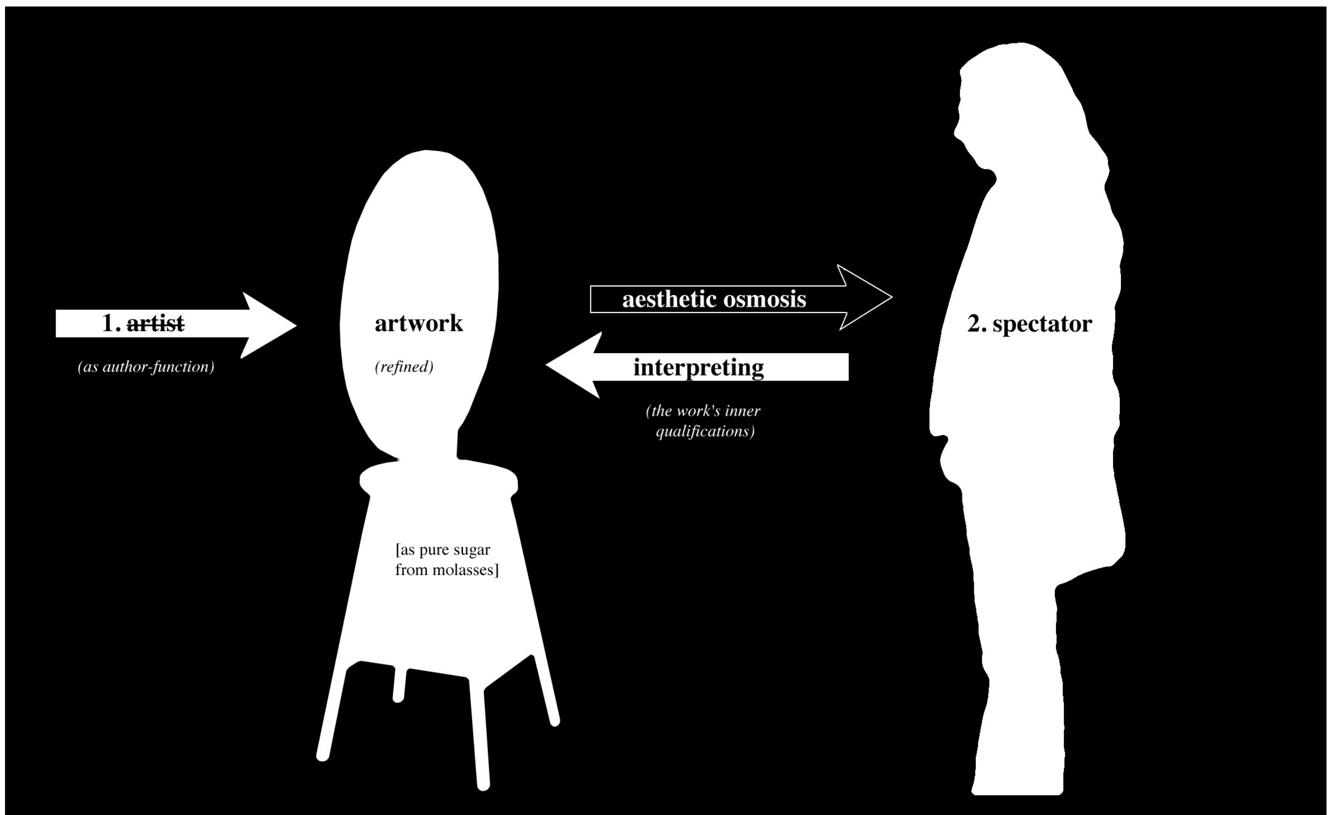
This last point brings up an important distinction that should be made between Eliot's use of this analogy and our present consideration of it in relation to Duchamp's text. By focusing exclusively on the filament of platinum and what its function has to say about the mind of the author-artist Eliot overlooks the remaining elements involved in this chemical reaction, thereby leaving out most of the relational interactions beyond the central figure of the author-artist. In this respect, Duchamp can be seen as taking this analogy more seriously than Eliot by considering not just the catalyst, which is only the first pole in Duchamp's equation, but also the two gasses – the oxygen and sulphur dioxide roughly coinciding with the spectator and the artwork in its *raw state* – that combine to form a new acid – sulphurous acid again roughly standing in for the final realization, accomplished by the second pole of the spectator, of a work as "art." The complex relational process that we see in the formation of this new acid can in this way be used to help describe or illustrate, in quasi-scientific terms, the transmutation that takes place when inert matter becomes a work of art – a process that is for Duchamp determined through an (aesthetic) act of transference.

Let us now examine the functioning of Duchampian transference through an (imagined) encounter with the readymade, in this case *Bicycle Wheel* (1913). To begin with, we know from Duchamp's numerous accounts that this object began not out of an active intention to make an "artwork" but rather for the personal curiosity and pleasure of attaching the wheel from a bicycle to the top of a wooden stool, in order to have something to play with in his studio. The truthfulness of his claims – in a manner that strangely reflects Freudian psychoanalysis – are irrelevant, since what is important is not his *real* actions or intentions but rather his framing and interpreting of himself through what he chooses (consciously or unconsciously) to say or not say. In fact, his conception of the personal *art coefficient* is based within this type of discrepancy, noting the psychological and affective differences between what an artist intends to create (the unexpressed but intended) and what is actually created (the unintentionally expressed). Thierry de Duve's describes the art coefficient as "Duchamp's Freudian (even Lacanian) witty and ironic redefinition of the romantic self," which presents as a "measurable ratio between repressed or failed intentions, idiosyncrasies and preferences on the one hand, and the return of the repressed, Freudian slips and failed acts on the other – in other words, the ratio between (disgusted) 'taste' and (ridiculous) 'genius'" (53). Therefore, it is not Duchamp's intentions when creating *Bicycle Wheel* that are of interest to us but rather his conceptual and material act(s) of creating this (aesthetic) object that, regardless of whether it is "good" or "bad," exists as *art in a raw state*. The following illustration – which I have loosely based on the visual language of *Coffee Mill* (1911) – describes the basic subjective mechanism of Duchamp's relation to the readymade.

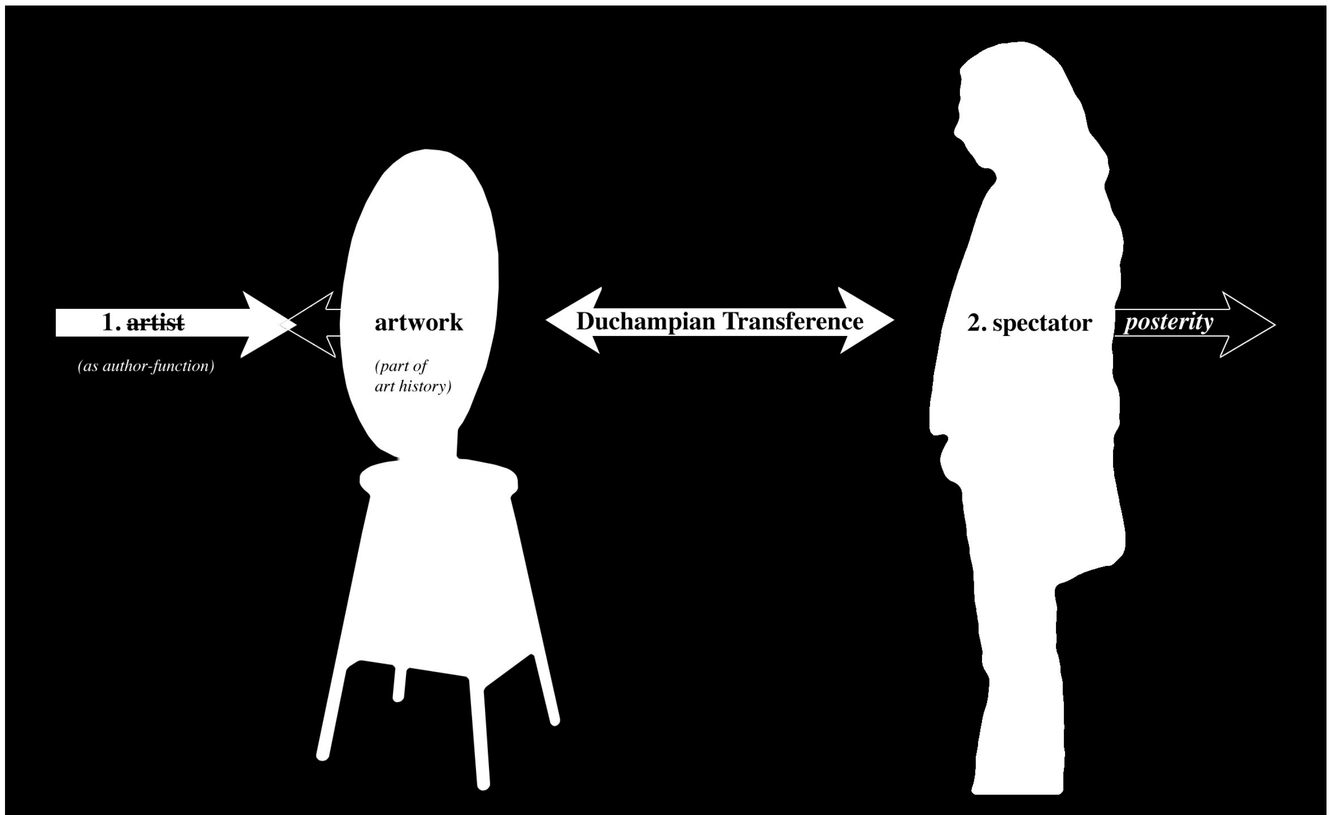


What exists at the completion of this first pole, which is the end of the artist's *personal* contribution to the creative act, is the work of art in a *raw state* that Duchamp proposes is the "inert matter" through which the (creative) transference occurs. The second pole of the creative process begins when the spectator encounters this raw artwork – in our current example, when we stand in front of the artistic construct that is *Bicycle Wheel*. It is the role of the spectator to (aesthetically) refine the work by, on the one hand, reacting critically to what the artist presents – experienced as what Duchamp calls an *aesthetic osmosis* from artist to spectator through the artwork – and, on the other hand, (actively) judging the work as perceived and interpreted from the position of the spectator that is notably disconnected from the work's creator. Here we can recognize the shift in the role of the artist's relation to their work. While Duchamp initially created Bicycle Wheel, once this work entered the outside world its connection to the person "Marcel Duchamp" is replaced by an association with the "Marcel Duchamp" that exists strictly as a function of art historical discourse – a contradictory existence as that is at once a presence and

absence, which I have illustrated by (following Derrida) putting the term "artist" under erasure.



It is the *author-function* of Duchamp (and not the *real* person) that we in fact engage with when viewing *Bicycle Wheel*, a reality of the artist's position – as a *mediumistic being* that is denied a *state of consciousness on the aesthetic plane* – that consequently leads to the realization that the artist-artwork-spectator relation is not unidirectional (emanating from artist). Rather, the functioning of the transference as Duchamp describes it necessarily involves two interdependent and dialogic creative actions. In the first we see a linear transfer from the artist through the artwork to the spectator and on to posterity, whereas in the second the critical (and answerable) response of the spectator is transferred onto the work of art, which in turn impacts the cultural understanding of the artist's *author-function* and therefore the posterity of both the artist and the work (54).



This dynamic vision of the act of artistic creation therefore hinges on an artwork's capacity to affect the spectator, who emerges – or, in Barthes term, is *born* – through an active participation in the transference process. Since it is the spectator who is tasked with completing the work that the artist begins, with actually *making* the historical work of art, we must acknowledge the (subjective) authority of the spectator's look as a catalyst for these relational interactions. As Duchamp tells Tomkins: "The onlooker is part of the making of the painting but also exerts a diabolical influence by looking alone," which he stresses is a "transcendental" action through which spectator's "change the physical image without knowing it" (55). Here we can recognize the full extent of Duchamp's theory, which aims not only to fundamentally question the assumed authority of the author-artist but also to establish a vision of art that has no definitive beginning or end. The creative act exists in and through the dialogic relations of Duchampian transference, as the spectator gets caught up in the repeated and repeatable relations that the artwork engenders.

References

1. Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis, An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 100-101.

1. Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo, 1973), 140.

1. Duchamp, "The Creative Act," 138.

1. Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1987), 70.

1. Calvin Tomkins, *Duchamp: A Biography* (New York: Owl Books, 1996), 396.
2. In her Masters thesis on "The Creative Act," Lauri Nelson reproduces several key documents related to Duchamp's text including the schedule for the A.F.A. convention (appendix 6), the January 1957 draft of "The Creative Act" (appendix 5), and the "Biographical Sheet" that Duchamp filled out for the convention, in which he refers to himself as a "freelance artist" (appendix 3). See Lauri G. Nelson, *"This Kind of Circus, all in Cordiality": Marcel Duchamp's Speech "The Creative Act*," M.A. Thesis (Houston: Rice University, 1994), 1104-120. This document is available online at: http://scholarship.rice.edu/bitstream/handle/1911/

13872/1360084.PDF?sequence=1

1. This roundtable was organized as a means of confronting the question of the state of art in the mid-twentieth century, bringing together a number of prominent individuals in fields related to art. In addition to Duchamp, the participants were George Boas, Gregory Bateson (who would also be on the panel with Duchamp at the American Federation of the Arts Convention in 1957), Kenneth Burke, Alfred Frankenstein, Robert Goldwater, Darius Milhaud, Andrew C. Richie, Arnold Schoenburg (who could not attend but instead provided a statement), and Frank Lloyd Wright. The roundtable consisted of three official sessions, with an unofficial session added at the end.

1. Marcel Duchamp, et al., *The Western Round Table on Modern Art* [Transcript of Proceedings], ed. Douglas MacAgy (San Francisco: San Francisco Art Association, 1949), 44c. This transcript is available online on UbuWeb at: http://www.ubu.com/historical/wrtma/transcript.htm . It should be noted that Duchamp starts off the roundtable discussion with a statement markedly similar this the one I have quoted, although his wording is a bit less concise. In this first version he connects the esthetic echo to the lack of an adequate definition of art, stating: “We also imply that art cannot be understood through the intellect, but is felt through an emotion presenting some analogy with a religious faith or a sexual attraction – an esthetic echo.” Duchamp,

et al., *The Western Round Table on Modern Art*>, 5a.

1. Duchamp, et al., *The Western Round Table on Modern Art*, 30a.

1. Tomkins, *Duchamp*, 397. For a discussion of “the intentional fallacy,” see W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).

1. This discrepancy between the reception of his work in America and France is, Miriam Jordan and I argue, a key motivating factor in Duchamp’s decision to establish the major collection of his artwork at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See Miriam Jordan and Julian Jason Haladyn, “The Posthumous Exile of Marcel Duchamp” [Errata Series pamphlet] (London: Blue Medium Press, 2013).

1. Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, 31; 45.

1. Duchamp, “The Creative Act,” 139.

1. In a particularly compelling exchange at the 1949 roundtable, Gregory Bateson and Frank Lloyd Wright respond to Duchamp’s statement that the artwork is *independent of the artist: Bateson*: Now, Mr.

Duchamp, what you are saying is that the artist is the picture's way of getting itself painted. That is a very serious and reasonable thing to say, but that implies that in some sense, the work of art exists before it is there on canvas. *Duchamp:* Yes; it has to be pulled out. *Bateson:* Which is on its way out. *Wright:* All right, gentlemen you can put it at that end too, if you want to, but no work of art is ever going to rise higher than the artist. *Duchamp:* Who is great, the work or the man? Duchamp, et al., *The Western Round Table on Modern Art*, 31a.

1. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Image – Music – Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 147.

1. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 20-21.

1. Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 148.

1. Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 147.

1. See, most notably, Harvey Hix, "Morte D'Author: An Autopsy," Iowa Review 17.1 (Winter, 1987): 131-150 and Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh

University Press, 1992). There are two key exceptions to this reading: William Gass, "The Death of the Author," *Salmagundi* 65 (Fall 1984): 3-26 and Molly Nesbit, "What Was an Author?" *Yale French Studies* 73 (Everyday Life, 1987): 229-257.

1. Roland Barthes, S/Z, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 4.
2. Duchamp, "The Creative Act," 139-140.

1. Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 148.

1. This quotation is taken from the contents page of Aspen, no. 5/6, where O'Doherty presents a lengthy quote from his pseudonym Sigmund Bode's 1928 (fictitious) book *Placement as Language*. Andrew Stafford has adapted *Aspen*, no. 5/6 for the web, presenting the box as a series of twenty-eight numbered items that include, in addition to the box itself, printed material, records, a reel of super-8 film and several (small) artworks. See: http://www.ubu.com/aspen/aspen5and6/index.html

1. Phong Bui and Brian O'Doherty, "In Conversation: Brian O'Doherty with Phong Bui," *Brooklyn Rail* (June, 2007): http://www.brooklynrail.org/2007/06/art/doughtery (accessed April 26, 2013). It is interested to note that, in a letter to Brian O'Doherty dated October 29, 1967, Barthes apologizes for the brevity of the text and expresses "his hopes that it would be acceptable and 'in sufficient harmony

with the issue.'" Quoted in Gwen Allen, *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 57.

1. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980), 121.

1. Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 115.

1. Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 124. Foucault briefly describes the emergence of this form of authorship "when a system of ownership and strict copyright rules were established (towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century) that the transgressive properties always intrinsic to the act of writing became the forceful imperative of literature." Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 124-125. For an extensive discussion of the legal aspects of the *author question* see Nesbit, "What Was an Author?" For a more general analysis of "What Is an Author?" see Adrian Wilson, "Foucault on the 'Question of the Author': A Critical Exegesis," *Modern Language Review* 99.2 (2004): 339-363

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 7.

1. Michel Foucault, “Preface,” in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, xii.

1. Michel Foucault, “The Father’s ‘No’,” *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, 86.

1. Marcel Duchamp, “Apropos of ‘Readymades,’” *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, 141. This text is of a talk he gave in 1961 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

1. Such an approach, while not explicitly argued for, is at least intimated by Octavio Paz in his essay “The Castle of Purity.” When discussing the readymade, he notes that the “wealth of commentaries on their significance … shows that their interest is not plastic but critical or philosophical,” with Paz later in the text referring to Duchamp’s gesture as “a philosophical … game more than an artistic operation.” Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare*, trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990), 22; 28.

1. Thierry de Duve, “Authorship Stripped Bare, Even,” RES: *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 19/20 (1990/1991): 235.

1. Foucault, “What Is an Author?” 128. Foucault explores this issue in *The Archaeology of*

Knowledge; see, most notably, chapter 1, “The Unity of Discourse,” 23-33. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2003).

1. Foucault, “What Is an Author?” 131.

1. Duchamp, “The Creative Act,” 138.

1. Duchamp, “The Creative Act,” 139.

1. Sigmund Freud, Dora: *An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 107.

1. Melanie Klein, “The Origins of Transference,” *Melanie Klein: Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963* (London: Vintage, 1997), 48. In a more recent iteration, Jean Laplanche proposes that “maybe transference is already, ‘in itself’, outside the clinic” and that “perhaps the principle site of transference, ‘ordinary’ transference, before, beyond or after analysis, would be the multiple relation to the cultural, to creation or, more precisely, to the cultural message.” Jean Laplanche, “Transference: Its Provocation by the Analyst,” *Essays on Otherness* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 222.

1. Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 113.

1. Jones, Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp, 114.

1. Stephen Zepke, "The Readymade: Art as the Refrain of Life," *in Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New* ed. Simon O'Sullivan and Stephen Zepke (New York: Continuum, 2008), 33. While Zepke's treatment of the readymade is admirable, his dialectic distinction between a Duchampian "conceptual" version and a Guattarian "affectual" version, particularly in relation to his claim that the readymade is re-made by Guattari (and Deleuze) "*against* Duchamp," does not hold up – and, I would add, is not supported by Guattari's treatment of Duchamp – since the readymade as Duchamp conceived it is already a ground for a modern form of art based within an (affective) act of becoming for the spectator. Zepke, "The Readymade," 35.

1. Félix Guattari, "The Transference," The *Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Genosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 63.

1. Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-gendering of Marcel Duchamp*, 133.
2. Jacques Lacan's discussion of transference is particularly helpful here, since it can also be

applied to a reading of the readymade. As he states: “If transference is only repetition, it will always be repetition of the same missed experience.” Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 143. Considered in relation to Lacan’s statement, the readymade can be seen as repeated and repeatable moments of transference that, as Duchamp makes clear, are constituted within and through the relational gap between artist and spectator. “What art is in reality is this missing link, not the links which exist,” Duchamp tells Arturo Schwarz, noting that art is no what we see: “art is the gap.” Quoted in Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 135.

1. Calvin Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: Afternoon Interviews* (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2013), 31.

1. T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921), 48. Lawrence Steefel informs us that in a 1961 personal discussion Duchamp said he “feels that Eliot’s essay presents his own feelings as well or better than he himself has ever done in writing.” Lawrence D. Steefel Jr., “Dimension and Development in *The Passage from the Virgin to the Bride*,” in *Marcel Duchamp in Perspective*, ed. Joseph Masheck (New York: Da Capo Press, 2002), 97 n15.

1. Eric Cameron, “Given,” in *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Thierry de Duve (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 1. In the discussion that follows this text (see pages 31-39) Rosalind Krauss takes particular issue with the connection being made between Duchamp and Eliot, which not only betrays her understanding of Duchamp but also cannot be supported by anything in his practice. Marjorie Perloff explores this topic in her essay “Duchamp’s Eliot: The Detours of Tradition and the Persistence of Individual Talent” – originally published in T. S. *Eliot and the Concept of Tradition*, ed. Giovanni Cianci and Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) – available online at: http://marjorieperloff.com/stein-duchamp-picasso/duchamps-eliot/

1. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” 47; 48.

1. Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: Afternoon Interviews*, 30.

1. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” 48.

1. Duchamp, “The Creative Act,” 139.

1. Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 319-320.

1. In psychoanalytic terms, this back-and-forth relation of artist and spectator involves not just transference but also a countertransference, which in the clinical setting describes the analyst's act of projecting (unconscious) feelings or emotions onto – and most often in response to – the analysand. I have intentionally avoided bring up this second term because, following the logic of Guattari's view of transference, I believe the act of counter-transference is already contained within the transference dynamic. Particularly for our present discussion, although I do believe this holds true generally, distinguishing between these two forms of transferential relations denies the necessarily dialogic nature of the psychological interactions being described.

1. Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: Afternoon Interviews*, 60-61. Duchamp uses *Nude Descending a Staircase* as an example of what he means, noting that it went from a scandalous painting to a *boring* one "by being looked at too much."