Fall 2007

Duchampian Authenticity and the Readymade Consumer

Terra D' An Rudisill
Old Dominion University

Recommended Citation

DUCHAMPIAN AUTHENTICITY AND THE READYMADE CONSUMER

by

Terra D'An Rudisill
B.F.A. December 1999, Appalachian State University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Old Dominion University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

HUMANITIES

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
December 2007

Approved by:

_____
Linda McGreevy (Director)

_____
Julia Romberger (Member)

_____
Scott Williams (Member)

ABSTACT

DUCHAMPIAN AUTHENTICITY AND THE READYMADE CONSUMER

Terra D'An Rudisill
Old Dominion University, 2007
Director: Dr. Linda McGreevy

The goal of this work is to define the term Duchampian authenticity. I focus primarily on the artist Marcel Duchamp's works and philosophies in relation not only to traditional philosophies regarding authenticity but also in relation to his effect on authenticity's metamorphosis in popular culture and the mass market. I propose that the monumental paradigm shifts produced by Duchamp's conceptual and aesthetic experiments within the realm of visual art spread into our cultural bedrock, ultimately defining the consumer's ability to attain authenticity and identity through inauthentic and ephemeral commodities. Marcel Duchamp challenged traditional notions of the authentic experience and translated it into a subjective moment where history, philosophy, society, art, culture and commerce combine in a visual exchange. This negotiated experience, Duchampian authenticity, recalls at once a sense of the past, a need for identity that can be changed as fluidly as shirts, and the desire for original experience found within calculated and manipulated contexts.

To my mother, whose unwavering support, dauntless wit,
and innate goodness I celebrate everyday
through my own actions and words.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Through close exploration of the artist Marcel Duchamp's aesthetic and philosophical precepts, a paradigm shift can be found where authenticity moves from being something held true in spite of external influence to a search for authenticity in confluence with the external. I propose that the artist and his works play an integral part in the negotiation and designation of value to mass-produced consumables packaged and sold as authentic experiences. The term *Duchampian authenticity* must also be defined and investigated as a new category of authenticity, in which the consumer's desire for identity is achieved through an inauthentic item endowed with new significance.

For this investigation, it is important to critically analyze authenticity through deeper hermeneutic exploration into the relationship between the art world and popular culture. More traditional philosophical discourses on authenticity must primarily be specified in order to fully establish the basis for Duchampian authenticity. While the works of Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant provide a framework for the general theory of authenticity, a definitive connection will be made using the evolved discourses of Existentialists such as Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche. Their revolutionary theories involving subjective truth and the conscious self endowed with agency are essential to establishing the manner in which authenticity is transformed by the individual in popular culture.

The implications of the Existentialists' theories are evident in the works and

---

This paper follows the format requirements of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* 6th edition by Kate L. Turabian.

philosophies of Marcel Duchamp. In Chapter Two, the artist, as well as the movements

he worked within, will be explored to reinforce the intertextuality between the realm of

high art and the industrial and consumer culture that characterized the turn of the

twentieth century. Appollinaire, a man famous for his artistic prophesy, said of Duchamp,

"Perhaps it will take an artist as removed from aesthetic preoccupations and as

preoccupied with energy as Marcel Duchamp to reconcile Art and the People."[1]

Duchamp not only questioned the very nature of art but also raged against the traditional

power structures within the art world that levied designations of taste and value.

Additionally, he overturned the concept of what constitutes visual authenticity and solidly

disputed the idea of artwork as an untouchable, precious artifact "created" by an artist.[2]

His investigations into what actually comprises value and meaning in a work of art lead

him to create his Readymades.

As I demonstrate by focusing on two of Duchamp's most famous Readymades,

Fountain and *L.H.O.O.Q.*, these works blurred the dividing line between high art and

commodity forms. The contextual anarchy and innovative visual arguments revealed by

the Readymades destroy the historical tradition that sermonizes on the cheapening of art

via reproduction. These works deftly illustrate that if any object can be high art, then

formal aesthetic sentiments can therein be attributed to any object in mass culture. In the

absence of a distinct author of the object, the viewer attains power to attribute the object's

authenticity. The Readymade is a storied portrait of combined visual and conceptual

complexity. It is not so much important as a physical object but as a concept. Like a mass

[1]Appollinaire quoted in Pierre Cabanne, *Duchamp & Co.*, trans. Peter Snowden (Paris: Pierre Terrail Press, 1997), 65.

[2]Calvin Tomkins, *The World of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Time Inc., 1966), 54.

produced commodity, it exists as both a concrete object and a theoretical concept dependant upon an audience to attain meaning. It must be strongly emphasized that Marcel Duchamp's Readymades provide the paradigm shift necessary for Duchampian authenticity to make its way into popular culture. When a common ceramic urinal is transformed via context into high art and the most sacred icon of high art is parodied, becoming a commodity that still maintains the allure of high art, truth and authenticity become conferred experiences for the masses.

In the pages that follow in Chapter Three, I will also explain how the media industry and new forms of mechanical reproduction prove to be a boon to the advancement of Duchampian authenticity. Theories of popular culture and its relation not only to high art but also to the consumer imperative must be investigated to create a framework for fully realizing Duchamp's effect on consumer culture. The critical theories of Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin will be examined to this end. By recognizing that "the observing subject prescribes whatever is authentic to the subject as observed,"[3] Adorno stresses that the authentic experience can be found simply when "an element of the concept becomes the absolute concept."[4] This builds an important bridge between the Existentialist's concepts, Duchamp's Readymades, and media theory.

Benjamin is the theorist that draws the most striking parallel to Marcel Duchamp's own concepts of reproductions retaining the same meaning and authenticity as the original in light of the viewer's gaze. Concepts of such reproductions being banal class identifiers that threaten issues of taste as well as art will also be defined using the works of Clement Greenberg. When

---

[3]Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 126.

[4]Ibid., 124.

mass media and commercially reproduced items gain a wider audience, Greenberg voices displeasure as the spheres of high and low culture merge closer. In contrast, the critic Harold Rosenberg does the most to assert the Readymade's meaning to society by stressing that taste should not be designated by an authority; any item can be experienced with all the authenticity and attributed value as that designated upon high art. By using manufactured goods like a painter's brush, Duchamp adds legitimacy to such critical assertions that question the aesthetic realm, and in turn, validate the transference of meaning into the public realm where the individual attributes value and authenticity to common objects, therein becoming a Readymade consumer.

As this critical discourse proceeds theoretically, it also manifests a chronological movement by examining how cultural philosophers after the 1960s revisited and revised the concept of authenticity. In the course of investigating the works of Barthes, Lyotard, Derrida, and Baudrillard, a new lens is focused through which to view the Self as an interpreting subject as well as an interpreted object. Theories about viewer reception serve to illustrate how truth is produced via a constant negotiation between the interpreting viewer and the media industry. As Duchamp achieves with the Readymades, corporations and advertisers produce an illusion of authenticity that transfers to the consumer. In respect to Duchampian authenticity, ever-advancing means of reproduction, re-presentation, and copies of a copy used to signify the original in popular culture, a simulation of the authentic object or experience becomes valid for the interpreting viewer/user. As Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is transformed via *L.H.O.O.Q.*, "gone is the Benjaminian 'aura' with its notions of originality, authenticity, and uniqueness."[5] Assisted by Duchamp's illustrative mustache, the *Mona Lisa* is, of course, now employed on mass-

---

[5]Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 33.

produced items and in advertising. Fueled by the consumer's desire for that connection to the original, this reversal of the Readymade process humanizes icons for public consumption just as the urinal becomes high art.

It is crucial that the role of the consumer audience be examined in light of becoming Readymade through Duchampian authenticity. As I will demonstrate, Duchamp shares much in common with the world of advertising. His witty visual arguments were "conceived with the intention of consciously defying convenient categorization...he thought very carefully about the nature of the work of art and how its meaning is shaped by the context in which it is presented."[6] The artist skillfully utilized clever word play and linguistic functions that linked text with common objects and altered the meaning of iconic images. In the same regard, utilizing language to add layers of communication creates meaning and value in a commodity by giving it a discernable voice. Once again, this reciprocity of visual/verbal interplay reiterates the active participation and self-awareness of the viewer necessary to create meaning.[7] Duchampian authenticity requires this level of understanding about meaning-making to become a new lexicon for how the consumer asserts agency to shape his or her own identity.

While Marcel Duchamp's works unmake the sacrosanct space of the museum, they also make the ordinary sacred for the consumer of objects. The Readymades welcome the viewer by using familiar commercial materials, containing concepts that lend themselves to translation into current "created" authentic artifacts that now conform to our contemporary, often transitory, needs and uses – originality, authenticity, and

---

[6]Martha Buskirk, "Thoroughly Modern Marcel," *October* 70 (Autumn 1994): 105.

[7]Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism,* 120-121.

uniqueness are created, recreated, molded and manipulated daily. I assert that Marcel

Duchamp's work stands to emphasize that social constructs define not only the institution

of art, but also who we are every day. The consumer's desire for self-reference through

meaningful commodities is the ultimate in self-making. The Readymade emphatically

argues that there exists no distinction between "Art" and "Commodity;" "aesthetic and

commodity values" are one in the same.[8] Replicas are no less legitimate than the originals

for Duchamp and for today's consumer. It is a valid contention to argue for a new

definition, Duchampian authenticity, to emerge within this framework of constructed

reproductions and manipulated representation, wherein the simulation becomes a valid

"real" work, completing the process of captivating the public with the ephemeral "new"

object. It is imperative to investigate the part Marcel Duchamp played in today's

consumer asking "what do these jeans say about me?" as opposed to "what do I have to

say about these jeans?"

---

[8]Dawn Ades, Neil Cox, and David Hopkins, eds., *Marcel Duchamp* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 160.

CHAPTER II

CONVENTIONS STRIPPED BARE

The Authentic Experience: Pre-1913

In order to validate the transformation of authenticity in respect to high art and the

commodity form, we must first investigate the philosophical origin of the concept in its

earliest incarnations. It is a notion that can be traced back to Socrates, for whom the

unexamined life was not even worth living[9] and on to Descartes' declaration "*Je pense,*

donc je suis."[10] Indeed, it is a conscious self that provides authenticity to existence.

Philosophers such as Aristotle and Descartes held that the individual desiring authenticity

must seek it in solitude, apart from the world's influence. They assert that this separation

from society affords the truest insight into one's own authenticity, the "core of genuine

existence." For Aristotle, an authentic existence was prized above all else; his description

of a conscious soul of action as an individual aware of his or her authenticity was not

only best for the individual but also best for the community.[11] It is emphasized that there

is a constant negotiation between "self" and "truth" when the individual is actively

immersed in society.[12]

Early Enlightenment and existentialist thinkers on their quest for human

---

[9]Plato, *Apology* in *The Dialogues of Plato* 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892); available from http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=766&chapter=93694&layout=html&Itemid=27; Internet; accessed 18 March 2007.

[10]Trans. "I think therefore I am." René Descartes, *Discourse of Method* Part IV, 1637; available from http://www.literature.org/authors/descartes-rene/reason-discourse/chapter-04.html; Internet; accessed 20 March 2007.

[11]Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 350 B.C.E. Trans. W. D. Ross; available from http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.html; Internet; accessed 24 March 2007.

[12]Marjorie Grene, "Authenticity: An Existential Virtue," *Ethics* 62, no. 4 (1952): 272.

authenticity sought both freedom and agency within the dueling forces of passion and reason. The deep introspective methods pursued by the early existentialists arose from the passion of the Romantics as well as the reason of the Enlightenment. Søren Kierkegaard traced man's essential relation to authentic truth back to Socrates when he states, "Can the truth be learned?...Socrates thinks through the difficulty by means of the principle that all learning and seeking are but recollecting...The truth is not introduced to him but was in him."[13] The groundwork for Kierkegaard's ideal of "essential knowledge" is laid by Kant when he describes authenticity within a being as "knowledge which is also doing" in relation to society, religion, and ethics wherein existence is always in a process of becoming.[14] For both Socrates and Kant authentic human thinking and acting are held in a perpetual duality. In contrast, Kierkegaard sees the need for a synthesis of individual existence and the lived experience as imperative to finding truth in subjectivity. He theorized that authenticity is reached through the uncertainty and anxiety that only an internal battle with the individual and an external battle with society can provide. One can not be removed from humanity to achieve authenticity.[15]

Within varying viewpoints, the authentic ideal generally remains closely tied with an ethical ideal, rooted in a need for freedom. It is a response to anxiety that affects the whole of civilization as much as it does the inner-workings of a man's soul. Authenticity essentially relies on self-construction to achieve absolute freedom, that is, a freedom that disavows the world's influence in dictating an individual's narrative and identity. By

---

[13]Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (1844), ed. and trans. Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 7-12.

[14]Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846), trans. David Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 176-177.

[15]Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, 7-12.

leading an authentic existence, "freedom can inform necessity and give meaning to the meaningless…freedom is not an abstraction to be generically applied to 'man' as such, but a risk, a venture, a demand."[16] As H.D. Forbes concludes in evaluating Rousseau's Solitary Walker, an ideal authentic soul whose human subjectivity is based on a natural inner sense of 'true self' could perhaps transform modern society's inauthentic milieu where an individual chooses to "seem" rather than to "be," in light of artificial desires created by false needs.[17]

For the existentialists, defining and living by the challenges of authenticity was a brave revolution. Kaufmann states that their "refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of adequacy of any body of beliefs whatsoever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life – that is the heart of existentialism."[18] Breaking away from Descartes, Kierkegaard definitively called for the separation of reason from the search for the authentic ideal, stating "reason is a whore," answering only to objectivity.[19] Only subjectivity yields the truly authentic ideal, he stresses, stating that "when subjectivity is the truth, the conceptual determination of the truth must include an expression for the antithesis to objectivity."[20] Although Kierkegaard sees only untruth in society, specifically in "the crowd," he does recognize that society provides the subjectivity that allows man

---

[16]Grene, "Authenticity: An Existential Virtue," 267.

[17]H.D. Forbes, "Rousseau, Ethnicity, and Difference," in *The Legacy of Rousseau*, eds. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 238-239.

[18]Walter Kaufmann, ed., *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975), 12.

[19]Ibid., 18.

[20]Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 117.

to measure himself against others. Public opinion removes the burden of having to be one's self. This leads one to fall into complacency provided by artifice and conformity. Kierkegaard deftly illustrates that "it is not truth that rules the world but illusions."[21]

Like Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky also embraces subjectivity as tantamount to human agency, with his Underground Man posing the question: "Can I have been constructed simply in order to come to the conclusion that all my construction is a cheat?"[22] Everything is at our disposal to be questioned, but our own selves, our desires, and our choices must be questioned most often. In his 1864 novel *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky's narrator concluded that an individual preferred "to act as he chose and not in the least as his reason and advantage dictated." The question is why a man would want "a rationally advantageous choice? What man wants is simply *independent* choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever that may lead."[23] In regards to choosing to "seem" rather than to "be," both yield an authentic choice: "That is my choice, my desire. You will only eradicate it when you have changed my preference. Well, do change it, allure me with something else, give me another ideal."[24]

Friedrich Nietzsche echoes Dostoevsky in his recognition that identity is tied just as closely to one's relation to the self as with the material world, creating an authenticity that is both individually and socially determined. Only through willful participation in life can Man become an authentic self-determined individual. With this revelation,

---

[21]Ibid., 90.

[22]Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* (1864), in *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975), 80.

[23]Ibid., 71.

[24]Ibid., 79.

Nietzsche trades absolute truth[25] for a fluid and subjective interpretation of truth,

declaring, "We can not decide whether that which we call truth is really truth or whether

it merely appears that way to us."[26] By moving away from Classical notions of morality

and reason, Nietzsche attaches importance to nihilism in the search for the authentic

"because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these 'values'

really had. – We require, at some time, new values."[27] The rules we create for ourselves

are illusions that can not be used as a basis for discovering self-truth. We can not be

defined if we are in an incessant process of becoming. When an authentic life is "the

product of life — However far man may extend himself with his knowledge, however

objective he may appear to himself — ultimately he reaps nothing but his own

biography."[28] Another important way in which Nietzsche investigates authenticity is in

relation to aesthetics. He surmises that the pleasure derived from the inauthentic aesthetic

world comes closest to defining authenticity as a negotiation between "two halves of our

existence, the waking and the dreaming state." Nietzsche stresses that a new way of

conceptualizing and viewing art must occur, allowing for most direct understanding of an

authentic experience:

> That life is really so tragic would least of all explain the origin of an art
> form – assuming that art is not merely imitation of the reality of nature but
> rather a metaphysical supplement of the reality of nature, placed beside it
> for its overcoming....But what does it transfigure when it presents the

[25]Friedrich Nietzsche challenges truth in "Human, All Too Human" (1878) stating "Error has turned animals into men; might truth be capable of turning man into an animal again?" in The *Portable Nietzsche,* ed. & trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1975), 63.

[26] Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Challenge of Every Great Philosophy" in *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975), 124.

[27] Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Beginning of *The Will To Power*" (1901) in *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975), 131.

[28]Nietzsche, "Human, All Too Human," 63.

world of appearance in the image of the suffering hero? Least of all the 'reality' of this world of appearance, for it says to us: 'Look there! Look closely! This is your life, this is the hand on the clock of your existence.[29]

Nietzsche finds that we often have need for the "pleasurable illusion" because we are "completely wrapped up in this illusion and composed of it" and become "compelled to consider this illusion as the truly nonexistent" but at the same instance "as empirical reality"[30].

Reality itself is the subjective authentic truth that must be created and carefully constructed throughout life. In his work *Man Has No Nature* (1941), the later existentialist writer Jose Ortega y Gasset stresses that it is man's responsibility "to make his own existence at every single moment" in so much as man "is given the abstract possibility of existing, but not the reality."[31] Ortega y Gasset's words reflect a return to the Nietzschian affirmation that authenticity and the appearance of the authentic may simply be a realty built on illusion:

> If, for a moment, we do not consider the question of our own 'reality,' if we conceive of our empirical existence, and of that of the world in general, as a continuously manifested representation of the primal unity, we shall then have to look upon the dream as a *mere appearance of mere appearance*, hence as a still higher appeasement of the primordial desire for mere appearance.[32]

---

[29]Friedrich Nietzsche, "Apollinian and Dionysian Art from *The Birth of Tragedy*," (1872) in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin (New York: St. Martin's Press. 1989), 484.

[30]Ibid., 477.

[31]José Ortega y Gasset, "Man Has No Nature" (1941) in *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Weyl, Clark and Atkinson (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975)153.

[32]Nietzsche, "Apollinian and Dionysian Art," 477.

Ortega y Gasset also reconciles Rousseau's man of nature with modernity in stating that "man's being is made of such strange stuff as to be partly akin to nature and partly not, at once natural and extranatural…half immersed in nature, half transcending it."[33] Such transcendence coincided with war in the first decade of the twentieth century. In the shadow of World War I, Hannah Arendt points to an imperative to cast off of identity in confluence with conformity in favor of a compulsion "to lose oneself" and distrust of the status quo of power structures.[34] With war overtaking the world, new philosophical and aesthetic revolutions had to emerge to displace moral and political convention that were no longer working to humanity's advantage.

Dada, Duchamp, and Readymade Modernism

Marcel Duchamp maintained a sardonic detachment from any movement, yet traveled fluidly between the twentieth century's most influential ones from Fauvism and Cubism to Dadaism and Surrealism. These visual styles were influenced mainly by emerging Technology and its counterpart, War. The works produced act as a mirror to reflect the violent and revolutionary motion, energy, and simultaneity of the times. Within the world of Dada, the movement with which Duchamp is most often associated, these sentiments were expressed in destructive and subversive experiments that reworked the relationship between word, image, meaning and context using a mixture of play and wit.

Dadaists rebelled against war and excess. Their authenticity was sought in anarchy to achieve freedom, a celebration of the total rejection of not only the art world's

---

[33]Ortega y Gasset, "Man Has No Nature," 154.

[34]Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 53.

traditions but also of society's traditions.[35] From 1915 to 1922, Dada's spontaneous

revolt against reason in art, beginning at the Café Voltaire in Zurich, allowed for artists of

all genres to experiment in such stream-of-consciousness activities as nonsense poetry,

publicity stunts, noise music, and automatic drawing. These artists were some of the first

to work with the manipulation of an original image via photomontage, recycled images,

and text/image juxtapositions to create new associations and visual symbols.[36] It has been

said that Dada was never a movement, but a revolutionary state of mind – "neither

modern nor modernistic, but immediate."[37] For Marcel Duchamp, Dada was "a sort of

nihilism….a way to get out of a state of mind – to avoid being influenced by one's

immediate environment or past, to get away from clichés."[38] Among the backdrop of

World War I, the movement was searching for liberation from social confines. It was also

seeking a liberated core within the art world while avoiding any reference to art that

seemed to be "the epitome of a pretentious, self-satisfied world."[39]

The large majority of Duchamp's work was produced between 1912 and 1923,

but his influence was somewhat delayed within the art world. He had long been a rather

successful painter but was drawn in by the visceral energy and conceptual/perceptual play

that served as quite a departure from the formal aesthetics of the day. Marcel Duchamp

exhibited an unremitting urge to dictate his own rules in crafting definitions of what

---

[35]Philip B. Meggs, ed., *A History of Graphic Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1992), 256.

[36]Ibid., 259.

[37]Alfred H. Barr, Jr., ed., *Fantastic Art, Dada, & Surrealism* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 15-16.

[38]Marcel Duchamp quoted in Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Paragraphic Books, 1959), 66.

[39]Tomkins, *The World of Marcel Duchamp*, 71.

constitutes an artist and a work of art and attacked painting with a distinct Nietzschian

nihilism.[40] His work quickly developed into a response to "problems of

institutionalization and reception....Duchamp seemed to realize, at an early stage, the

importance of mounting his rebellion against those conventions from within a context

that would give structure and meaning to his gestures."[41]

Marcel Duchamp's skepticism regarding the ultimate value of art lead him to

create his Readymades. These works were mass-produced functional items that were

taken directly from the factory's mass production lines and the commercial world and

placed into a shifting context within the auspices of the gallery's space. Far removed

from the authenticity of its original intended use and surroundings, the Readymade's

aesthetic was acquired when Duchamp selected and placed it. Consequently, the item

itself remained neutral until the viewer negotiated its meaning. It is an act of designation

rather than creation that allows Duchamp's Readymades to develop into icons of great

conceptual and cultural complexity. They transcend the confines of the physical object to

become the representation of Idea, challenging perspectives on traditional notions of art

and artist. While the viewer is challenged to think rather than just see by these works,

Duchamp holds that the retinal and the cerebral are two aspects of one entity, locked

forever in struggle and companionship.[42]

Within the Readymade, many aspects were at play. Aside from challenging

artistic tradition and the powers of perception, Marcel Duchamp often utilized word play

---

[40]Buskirk, "Thoroughly Modern Marcel," 113.

[41]Ibid., 124.

[42]Arturo Schwarz, ed., *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 2000), 442-443.

in themes and titles to add to the Readymade's clever mystique in an attempt "to master

not only the commodity but also its means of communication, its language" when it

would speak to the viewer as a "new" object transformed from a common item.[43] The

artifice surpassed the art and the authentic nature of the context in an almost alchemical

transformation, playing with the invisible power of meaning in a multitude of

dimensions. Duchamp's Readymades ultimately reflect how reality is created in the mind

via integration of images, symbols/allegories, context, and meaning.

Fountain/L.H.O.O.Q. in High/Low Focus

A course of proper investigation into Duchamp's work would not be complete

without focus on the iconic *Fountain* (see Fig.1). In the 1917 New York Armory show,

he presented a common ceramic urinal as a work of art under the new title (signed by "R

Mutt"). He said of *Fountain* (a "Readymade aided" by its given title) after its rejection

from the show:

> Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no
> importance. He *CHOSE* it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so
> that its useful significance disappeared under a new title and point of view;
> he created a new thought for that object.[44]

Duchamp's Readymade is aided by the fact that it is essentially already made, produced

on an assembly line. As art, its process of creation does not occur in the tradition sense

but the artist plucks the object from the industrial world. A degree of "modification or

---

[43]Molly Nesbit, "Last Words (Rilke, Wittgenstein, Duchamp)," *Art History* 21.4 (1998): 63.

[44]Marcel Duchamp quoted in Tomkins, *The World of Marcel Duchamp*, 55.

displacement of the original material is inherent" to *Fountain*'s creation.[45] Like the same word presented in an altered context having many different meanings in a Foucauldian sense, the urinal, "taken out of its context, is bound to mean several things at the same time."[46] Juan Antonio Ramírez deftly illustrates *Fountain* as being "a product which has already been produced...selected by the artist with the ambiguous aim of emphasizing the high aesthetic value, unknown until then, and also of discrediting the system consecrated as 'fine art'."[47] The object is endowed with aesthetic significance. This particular Readymade "made it clear that the idea of 'art' was produced contextually... was a lever that pried open art (and art history) to debates about meaning and context, particularly the question of how art's meaning is derived in large measure from its institutional and linguistic contexts."[48] Duchamp proposed revisions to society's language. There is a displacement of both physical and logical context. By the act of choosing an object, Duchamp reduced "the idea of aesthetic consideration to the choice of the mind, not to the ability or cleverness of the hand."[49] In fact, any common object becomes an assisted Readymade when it is acted upon by the designation of significance by an "author"; the object itself is not changed or modified but the perception of it is altered. *Fountain* enters the realm of high art because it is both designated and perceived as art.

---

[45] Juan Antonio Ramírez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1998), 27.

[46] Ibid., 29.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Richard A. Turner, *Inventing Leonardo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 51-2.

[49] Marcel Duchamp quoted from a 1953 interview with Harriet, Sidney, and Carroll Janis in *ibid* in Schwarz, *The Complete Works*, 615.
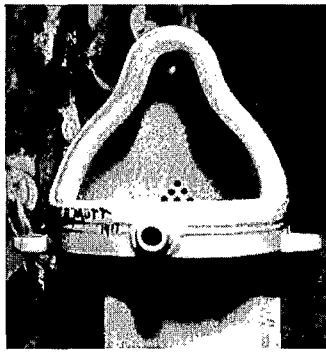
18

Figure 1. Marcel Duchamp. *Fountain.* 1917. Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz.

When contemplating what would be included in an ideal work of art, Duchamp

concludes that it would contain a "mixture of history and anecdote in the best sense of the

word…the visual elements would be less important than usual in a painting…everything would

become conceptual, that is, dependent upon something other than the retina."[50] Duchamp found

in Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* that "mixture of history and anecdote." In 1919, he penciled

a moustache and a goatee on a postcard-sized 8 x 5 print of *Mona Lisa*. He signed it with his

name, the date, and the city (Paris) on the back. Then he added something else – the letters

L.H.O.O.Q. at the bottom; they are pronounced phonetically in French as "elle a chaud au cul,"

translating colloquially to "she has a hot ass."[51] Outrage ensued. The aesthetes would not allow

for such desecration, such vulgarity: "If the Mona Lisa were to be repudiated, it would have to

be on aesthetic grounds."[52] He had taken their object from the realm of the sacred to the depths

of the profane. Duchamp was not concerned about conforming to aesthetic precepts. With

L.H.O.O.Q. (see Fig. 2), he was no longer seeking a concrete definition of art, but was instead

tracing the evolution of art to uncover how it had become what it was and to discover

[50]Ibid., 81.

[51]Schwarz, *The Complete Works,* 202.

[52]Rochelle Gurstein, "The Mystic Smile: Becoming Mona Lisa;" *Arts & Opinions* 2, no. 1 (2003); available from http://www.artsandopinion.com/2003_v2_n1/gurstein.htm; Internet; accessed 23 April 2007.

what it could be – the nature of art outside of a definition.[53] He was also unconcerned

with the emotional foibles and icon-worship common among of the Romantics. To them,

a transmission of feeling was tantamount to making a successful work of art and giving it

a practical purpose. In contrast, Duchamp was of the opinion that art serves no practical

purpose; it exists to elevate the human mind outside of emotion.[54] Although his variation

on the *Mona Lisa* did in fact incite brief violent emotional reactions, the effect of

Duchamp's innovative reconceptualization was lasting.

Figure 2. Marcel Duchamp. *L.H.O.O.Q.* 1919.

Marcel Duchamp not only challenged his audience's preconceptions about art but

also about the artist. He contested the importance of the artist's identity and sexuality by

often dressing and creating works as his female alter ego, Rrose Sélavy.[55] Duchamp

himself made an interesting observation upon viewing the completed *L.H.O.O.Q.*: "The

curious thing about that moustache and goatee is that when you look at it the Mona Lisa

---

[53]Morris Weitz, *Problems in Aesthetics* (Albany: Macmillan Company, 1970), 170.

[54]Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the Engendering of Marcel Duchamp,* ed. Norman Bryson, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 34.

[55]Cabanne, *Duchamp & Co.*, 61.

becomes a man. It is not a woman disguised as a man: it is a real man, and that was my

discovery without realizing it at the time."[56] To the viewing public, Duchamp's

L.H.O.O.Q. may have made a profane mockery of the sacred *Mona Lisa*, but

conceptually, the artist took it the level of the Kantian Sublime. In accordance with

Kant's notion of sublimity, da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* would fit into the "mathematical"

paradigm. Under this precept, we can reason that what we see transcends our senses and

illuminates the imagination; it "causes us to sense the magnitude of our subjectivity,

capable of wanting something that we cannot have." Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* works

within Kant's "dynamic" paradigm of the Sublime; "it shakes our spirit" all the while

causing "a feeling of unease, compensated for by the sense of our moral greatness."[57]

Consequently, both works fit within Friedrich von Schiller's apt and profound definition:

> Through the sense of the Sublime, therefore, we discover that our state of
> mind is not necessarily determined by the state of our sensible perceptions,
> that the laws of nature are not necessarily our own, and that we possess an
> autonomous principle that is independent of all sensible emotions. The
> Sublime object is a kind of duality. Either we refer it to our intellectual
> capacities, only to be vanquished in our attempts to form an image and a
> concept of it; or we refer it to our vital energy and consider it as a power
> against which our own vanishes away.[58]

Such a challenge to perception and laws also challenges the viewer's own sense of authenticity

as the work's authenticity is also negotiated.

    L.H.O.O.Q. was a Readymade unlike others that Marcel Duchamp had created; in fact

it was an inversion of the process. Schwarz categorizes *L.H.O.O.Q.* as a "rectified Readymade"

---

[56]Marcel Duchamp quoted from Herbert Crehan, "Dada," *Evidence* no. 3 (Fall 1961), in Schwarz, *The Complete Works,* 203.

[57]Umberto Eco, ed., *History of Beauty*, trans. Alastair McEwen (New York: Rizzoli, 2004), 294.

[58]Friedrich von Schiller quoted from *On the Sublime* (1801) in Eco, *History of Beauty*. 297.

in which an existing object is "corrected". In this case, it is the purchased post card that

must be repaired and re-rendered.[59] Displaying common objects under a new title,

according to Umberto Eco, involves "the persuasion that every object (even the lowest

variety) has formal aspects that we rarely pay attention to."[60] The "formal aspects" and

"aesthetic significance" of the Mona Lisa have been lauded, inspected, and documented

infinitum. *L.H.O.O.Q* was a reversal of the Readymade process; instead of raising the

common object to the position of high art, the high art becomes the common object. In

his notes, Duchamp writes "Reciprocal Readymade: Use a Rembrandt as an ironing

board." He refers to this note later in life when questioned about these "Reciprocal

Readymades" or "Reverse Readymades": "That would be to take a Rembrandt and to use

it like an ironing board, you see, that would be the reverse by the fact that the *tableau* [or

painting] became the ready-made of a true *tableau* [or table] made by Rembrandt, which

becomes a ready-made for ironing shirts, you understand?"[61] Although he never pursued

that particular project, Duchamp did in fact created a successful "Reciprocal Readymade"

with *L.H.O.O.Q.*

While he moves the highest art to the level of the banal by literally defacing it,

Duchamp also raises a cheap postcard-sized reproduction print to the level of high art to

be displayed within the auspices of a museum. David Joselit points out that, when spoken

in English, *L.H.O.O.Q.* sounds like "look."[62] The work is meant to "be considered as a

---

[59]Schwarz, *The Complete Works,* 45.

[60]Eco, *History of Beauty*, 406.

[61]Marcel Duchamp quoted in Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds. *Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: DeCapo Press, 1973), 32.

[62]Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, 90.

tautological commentary on the ocular relationship between" the work and the viewer.[63] This symbiotic relationship "was conceived with the intention of consciously defying convenient categorization...he thought very carefully about the nature of the work of art and how its meaning is shaped by the context in which it is presented."[64] The viewer is witnessing a cheap print card of the Mona Lisa used as a medium, just as pigments and marble are used, manipulated by the mind and hand of Duchamp, to create an artifact of the art world and for the people in the same moment.[65]

The very notion of the artist "using" the *Mona Lisa* as a primary medium transformed the original into an emblem or icon of itself. With its traditional context removed, a transformation occurred that allowed a refiguration of the image. As the connection to the original was broken, the *Mona Lisa* became a symbol in itself, just as the portrait of George Washington on the one-dollar bill no longer brings to mind the original Gilbert Stuart portrait.[66] Although *L.H.O.O.Q.* was an "original," much like the one dollar bill, Duchamp had to reproduce the object several times to meet the demand of the public and his peers. He also created the now-lost *Mustache & Beard of L.H.O.O.Q.* in 1941, which presents just the facial hair of the *Mona Lisa* without the painting. Another version, *L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved* (see Fig. 3) was, in fact, the original *Mona Lisa* intact once more. With this, not only did Duchamp reaffirm the original painting's androgyny, but he also signed and retitled almost one hundred reproductions of Leonardo's masterpiece, completing the process of making the "new" object

---

[63]Ramírez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even,* 48.

[64]Buskirk, "Thoroughly Modern Marcel," 105.

[65]George Dickie, "The New Institutional Theory of Art," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology,* eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 199.

[66]Robert A. Baron, "Mona Lisa Images for a Modern World" (2001), Available from http://www.studiolo.org/Mona/MONALIST.htm; Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

part of the public realm.[67]

Figure 3. Marcel Duchamp. *L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved.* 1965.

Appollinaire said of Duchamp's work, "This art may produce works whose strengths

will go far beyond anything we can imagine. It may even come to perform a social function."[68]

The art establishment's notion of form was traded for anti-form. Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is one

such artifact that now conforms to our contemporary, often transitory, needs and uses. Our

perception of the original has been forever altered. Does the original substance of *Mona Lisa*

still exist within the framework of pop culture and mass media? Serge Bramly in 1995 argued

against the popularization of her image, stating:

> [the work has been] reproduced *ad infinitum* on postcards, chocolate boxes
> and souvenir ashtrays, over-used by an idolatrous public, subjected to all
> the manipulations of journalists and advertisers, caricatured, parodied,
> decked out in alien trappings, the *Mona Lisa* has been sapped of her
> substance, has lost her identity. Victim of her fame, she has ceased to be a
> painting and become a public icon, a cliché.[69]

---

[67]Schwarz, *The Complete Works*, 204.

[68]Appollinaire quoted in Cabanne, *Duchamp & Co.*, 65.

[69]Serge Bramly quoted in Robert A. Baron, "Mona Lisa Images for a Modern World" (2001); available from http://www.studiolo.org/Mona/MONALIST.htm; Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

Does this darling of all media, incorporated into everything from love songs to socks, feed our desire for Leonardo's love of beauty, his age of man's quest for enlightenment, discovery, and perfection, or does it evolve from Duchamp's re-presentation? When Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* is used on mass-produced items and in advertising, the buyer desires that connection between intellectual and social class to which these works belong. Via a transformation to kitsch, it functions as a class identifier to the consumer seeking identity with culture, although they may not be interested in the intellectual or aesthetic principles of the original image. For this to occur, Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* had to be removed from the realm of high art to a market of commodity consumption; Duchamp was the catalyst.[70]

---

[70]Robert A. Baron. "Mona Lisa Images for a Modern World" (2001); available from http://www.studiolo.org/Mona/MONALIST.htm; Internet; accessed 20 March 2006.

CHAPTER III

READYMADE CHIC

The rise of capitalism and shifting social conditions produced a sociopolitical

state critically defined as modernity. The aesthetic modernism of which Marcel Duchamp

was a part was a direct response to modernity. This movement of self-awareness and

originality, rupture and transformation, was altered in conjunction with consumption in

the Western world that began to favor "the transitory, the elusive and the ephemeral."[71]

For the avant-guard, authenticity as the Existentialists and Romantics previously defined

it became a pursuit for identity and freedom in a landscape of manufactured need and

industrialization, a struggle against dehumanization in society.[72]

Linda Hutcheon, drawing upon the framework of Andreas Huyssen's theories,

specifies that "modernism defined itself through the exclusion of mass culture and was

driven by its fear of contamination by the consumer culture burgeoning around it, into an

elitist and exclusive view of aesthetic formalism and the autonomy of art."[73] The cultural

monopoly held by the avant-guard was threatened by new methods of mechanical

reproduction and a burgeoning culture industry generated to the masses. As an art history

term, modernism refers roughly to a period between the 1860s and 1970s. The term is

used to describe both a style and an ideology, a philosophy of modern art. When

modernist culture converged with common life, critics such as Clive Bell and Clement

---

[71]Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity – An Incomplete Project," ed. Thomas Docherty. *Postmodernism: A Reader* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheat, 1993), 99.

[72]Michael Kammen, *American Culture American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 165.

[73]Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, 27.

Greenberg signaled a sour note on what they viewed as "cultural decay in the removal of hierarchies and authority".[74] Greenberg, in his 1939 work *Avant-Garde and Kitsch,* argued to keep formal culture and folk culture from meeting in popular culture by safeguarding works so that "content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself."[75] Theorists like Greenberg attempted to maintain an historical tradition, power structure, and language to define art. In contrast, Duchamp sought to destroy dictated classifications and decided to act radically outside of art's historical definitions, dissolving traditional boundaries between art and life, imitation and authenticity. While artists such as Picasso, Kandinsky, and Cezanne were preoccupied with the versatility of the mediums in which they worked, saving invention for the arrangement of space, shape and color, Duchamp's works could not be reduced to pure visual form and therefore could not be classified and critiqued using traditional methods. The artist's Readymades rely on the viewer's conceptual and perceptual engagement for meaning. By choosing common objects that become endowed with meaning by the viewer rather than dictating an objective truth through painting, Duchamp directly addresses not only the viewer of art but also the consumer of mass produced commodities in popular culture.

Mechanical Reproduction and Duchampian Authenticity

As defined by Jürgen Habermas, modernity "unfolded in various avant-guard movements and finally reached its climax in the Café Voltaire of the Dadaists and in

---

[74]Habermas, "Modernity," 100.

[75]Clement Greenberg, ed., "Avant-Guard and Kitsch" (1939) in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1961), 8.

surrealism," where experimenters such as Duchamp found "a common focus in a changed consciousness of time."[76] The Dadists shunned traditional visual art aesthetics, specifically in relation to painting, and openly accepted new media technologies found in popular industrialized culture. Dada's experiments with the range of expressive possibilities and simultaneity found in graphic design, film and photography as well as the kinetic nature of machines influenced Duchamp's affinity for popular culture. As society also developed a love affair with commodities and technology at the turn of the twentieth century, new critical discourses emerged to analyze the culture industry and the audience's role in it. In order to understand Duchamp's effect on consumer culture, theories of this culture must also be addressed.[77]

Culture and commodification were the main areas of critical study for the Frankfort School in Germany beginning in the 1930s. This group of theorists analyzed technology, the culture industry, mediated authenticity and popular culture. Such members as Theodore Adorno surmised that the popular culture industry was a combination tool of capitalist, corporate, and political control that lulled consumers into conformity and obedience. Emergent forms of mass production gradually eroded individualism, identity, free will and ultimately authenticity with an abundance of products, entertainment, and processed designations of class and taste. The industry that grew from mechanical reproduction, according to Adorno, asserts to serve the consumers' needs and wants. It actually creates, standardizes, and manipulates their

---

[76]Habermas, "Modernity," 99.

[77]Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 256.

desires, therein making the consumer the very product of the popular culture industry.[78] Hence, authenticity becomes a false consciousness bound by concerns with audience and appearance. As for the culture industry, Adorno states that it "undeniably speculates on the conscious and unconscious state" of the masses who "are not primary but secondary, they are an object of calculation, an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object."[79] Like Greenberg, Adorno also mourns the subverted spheres of culture, remarking, "The culture industry intentionally integrates its consumers from above. To the detriment of both, it forces together the spheres of high and low art… [t]he seriousness of high art is destroyed in the speculation about its efficacy."[80]

Another Frankfort School theorist, Walter Benjamin, broke with the critical evaluations of the School. Benjamin viewed culture in light of capitalism and mechanical reproduction as an "aestheticization of politics so that participation in – not pacification through – the image was central to mass-mediated society."[81] In his 1936 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin locates a shift in the status of traditional art from the aesthetic to more technical means of reproducing an experience when photography and film begin to dominate the imaginations of the masses. This shift creates a "relationship between the cultural and the political, focusing also on the ways in

---

[78]Dominic Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture.* 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 1995), 69-70.

[79]Theodore Adorno quoted from 1947 work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in Strinati, *Popular Culture*, 55-56.

[80]Ibid., 55.

[81]Arvind Rajagopal, "The Violence of Commodity Aesthetics: Hawkers, Demolition Raids and A New Regime of Consumption," *Social Text* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 1.

which metaphors of the economy and spectacles of consumption underwrite the political

work of images."[82] Most important to understanding Duchamp's role in popular culture,

Benjamin recognizes that the "contemporary masses" reach a point of "overcoming the

uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction."[83] The culture industry does

not exist to hypnotize viewers into a passive role but, rather, demands active

participation. Culture becomes industry and art becomes commodity. Benjamin's theories

provide a framework for validating Marcel Duchamp as a producer who uses modern

tools of representation, such as a urinal or a bottle rack, to transform messages and means

of delivery (See Figs. 4 & 5). By defining critical observations of aesthetics in relation to

mechanical reproduction, Benjamin, like Duchamp, offers a modern way of judging

modernity that champions the need for new discourses in art and new forms of

authenticity found in confluence with society and popular culture.[84]

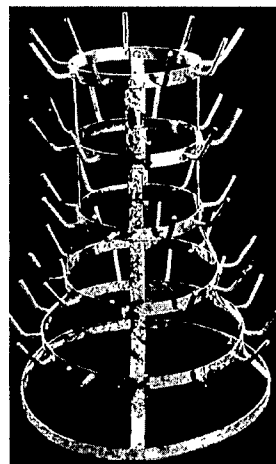Figure 4. Marcel Duchamp. *Bicycle Wheel.*
1913/1964.

Figure 5. Marcel Duchamp. *Bottlerack.*
1914/1936.

---

[82]Ibid.

[83]Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" 1936; available from http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm; Internet; accessed 18 April 2007.

[84]Strinati, *Popular Culture*, 73-74.

Benjamin states in his essay, "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."[85] This singular state is an artifact's aura, occupying not just an aesthetic but an historical narrative. The term "aura" is the power and meaning that comes from an original artifact's inherent inability to be reproduced. It renders an object untouchable, unapproachable, and borderline sacred; aura is encapsulated in da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Benjamin surmised "that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art."[86] Benjamin does not view aura and authenticity as lost; they are transformed. The moment that "authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed" and becomes transformed into a subjective exchange.[87] Through means of reproduction, Benjamin and Duchamp found common ground in their appreciation of the fact that objects of high culture need not be alienated from mass culture. Traditional critiques and discourses on authenticity were no longer viable in relation to items produced for the purpose of pleasure versus utility. As a sociologist and cultural critic, Benjamin asserts that reproductions gain their own aura, a unique authenticity, which allows "the reproduction to meet the beholder" and "reactivates the object reproduced."[88]

In reference to Duchamp's 1934 experiment *The Green Box*, Benjamin states,

> Once an object is looked at by us as a work of art, it absolutely ceases its objective function. This is why contemporary man would prefer to feel the specific effect of the work of art in the experience of objects disengaged

---

[85]Benjamin, "The Work of Art."

[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

from their functional contexts [crossed out: torn from this context or thrown away]…rather than with works nominated to play this role.[89]

Just as Duchamp felt that the notion of an "original" was rapidly declining in aesthetic importance, Benjamin also asserted the notion that "technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself." Both men noted a movement away from logic and law to accident and play, one in which creative destruction and destructive creation were both necessary.[90]

In relation to authenticity transformed via mechanical reproduction, Walter Benjamin questioned whether the very concept of authenticity was even authentic anymore. Even Theodor Adorno noted that Benjamin coined the term "aura" at the same time that it became something "impossible to experience."[91] In a photograph, can its subject only be authentic in the moment with every other moment after being just a reproduction of that "here and now" moment? Does the loss of that moment's aura and authenticity cheapen the viewer's experience of it in light of mechanical reproduction and automatism? If so, we require progressive ways of seeing and judging this experience. Stanley Cavell describes a new subjective perspective: "Photography maintains the presentness of the world by accepting our absence from it. The reality in a photograph is present to me while I am not present to it."[92] In fact, Alfred Stieglitz's photograph of *Fountain* titled *Marcel Duchamp Fountain 1917* is the only documented existence of the

---

[89]Walter Benjamin quoted from "Paralipoménes et variants de la version définitive" in Rosalind E. Krauss, "Reinventing the Medium," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 2 (1999): 293.

[90]Benjamin, "The Work of Art."

[91]Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, 9.

[92]Stanley Cavell, "Sights and Sounds: from *The World View*," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology,* eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 564.

Readymade first exhibited by Duchamp. The photo itself has been widely regarded "as

the most subversive icon of modernity" because it is a mechanically reproduced copy of

an original work that was itself designated as art from a mechanically reproduced object.

The original object and author are no longer physically present or needed for the viewer

to subjectively experience something and apply value to that experience.[93]

The aura of a work is affected and being effected by both the context and the

viewer. The viewer or consumer attains the power to describe, explain, interpret, and both

critically and aesthetically evaluate art as well as products of popular culture. They

acquire agency to construct authenticity. Items must be manifested by the viewer;

"technical, industrial, media objects, artifacts of all kinds want to signify, be seen, be

read, be recorded" by a receptive audience.[94] The social democratizing ability of a

reproduction to gain a higher status through the gaze of the viewer is fully realized in

Duchamp's Readymades. In these works, "a product which had already been produced

was selected by the artist with the ambiguous aim of emphasizing its high aesthetic value,

unknown until then, and also of discrediting the system consecrated as 'fine art'."[95] The

viewer becomes the critic and the judge to replace the "fine art" power structure. The

Readymades, like commodities, "are ideas, signs, allusions, concepts…[t]hey no longer

signify anything at all" without an audience to produce meaning.[96] From a populist

approach, audiences are seen as "self-conscious, active subversives, exploiting media

---

[93]Caroline Cros, *Marcel Duchamp,* trans. Vivian Rehberg (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2006). 48.

[94]Jean Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays,* ed. Sylvere Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 2005), 122.

[95]Ramírez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even,* 29.

[96]Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art,* 126.

culture for their own ends, and resisting and reinterpreting messages circulated by

cultural producers."[97] The audience has an active dialogue with the commodity in popular

culture. With the "rise of national advertising" and mechanical reproduction, such men as

Nietzsche, Wilde, and Duchamp "acknowledged the truth of masks, the seriousness of

play, the reality of fantasy" in an audience that found new value in "constructing and

reconstructing a self through purchase and display."[98]

<div align="center">Manufacturing Truth</div>

Through reproduction and multiplicity, a unique object becomes available both

physically and emotionally to the masses. When objects detach from their perceived original

context, they are reinvested with a new aesthetic power. The perception of the viewer/user is

also changed and a sense of uniqueness is extracted even from the reproduced multiple.[99]

Consumers discover a "creativity in the act of consumption and emphasize the concept of

'appropriation': selecting those aspects of media messages that are meaningful to them and

then 'recycling' them to suit their own needs."[100] As opposed to seeking truth within

presented reality, the representations of reality become unique truths. The strain between

imitation and authenticity reaches an odd equilibrium that Miles Orvell describes as holding

all the irony and authenticity of "a photograph of the crucifixion."[101] Experiencing the

aesthetic in these terms alters "our cognitive signification and our normative expectations and

---

[97]Strinati, *Popular Culture*, 236

[98]Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 270.

[99]Krauss, "Reinventing the Medium," 293.

[100]Kammen, *American Culture*, 211.

[101]Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 311.

changes the manner in which all these moments refer to one another."[102] The simple gesture

of Duchamp's Readymade demands a new "structure of contextualization and

interpretation."[103] For Duchamp, an important aspect of the Readymade "is its lack of

uniqueness…the replica of a Readymade deliver(s) the same message," therefore fully toying

with issues of institutionalization and reception in both the art world and in mass culture.[104]

Borrowing from the world of advertising, Duchamp "surrounded these mass-produced

objects with personal anecdotes and memories in order to emphasize their anonymous and

unaesthetic nature and to better capture the viewer's attention."[105]

The established aesthetic sphere primarily concerned with representation

dissolved in favor of "the media of expression and the techniques of production

themselves became the aesthetic object."[106] The divide between high and low culture

grew slight with the emergence of mass media and commercially reproduced items

gaining a wider audience. Aesthetics combine with deception in the union of art and

commerce, and an "artistic genius" becomes "an especially acute manipulator of dazzling

surfaces." Superficial authenticity could be applied simply by "assembling the

appropriate status markers" to be transferred to the consumer through the consumable.[107]

Once artifacts and images were mass produced, any individual was allowed to be a

mimetic aesthete regardless of traditional societal structures. With many similar

---

[102]Habermas, "Modernity," 106.

[103]Buskirk, "Thoroughly Modern Marcel," 122.

[104]Ibid., 121-124.

[105]Cros, *Marcel Duchamp*, 57.

[106]Habermas, "Modernity," 104.

[107]Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 269.

consumables on the market, the culture industry has to create a quality of uniqueness and authenticity around individual products. This brilliant "orchestration of surface effects" transferred the authenticity found in an inauthentic unoriginal item to the consumer. The transference of aura to mass-produced objects leads consumers to believe that "they could create a sense of individuality by buying things that were essentially the same."[108]

In regards to the sameness of commercial items of popular culture and matters of taste, Clement Greenberg specifies kitsch and other mass-produced objects as class identifiers. Although he does give kitsch the benefit of the doubt as being "a product of the industrial revolution which urbanized the masses of Western Europe and America and established what is called universal literacy,"[109] Greenberg mainly criticizes profitable kitsch and mass-produced commodities, "the culture of the masses," as a "debased and academicized simulacra of genuine culture" that is "the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times."[110] In direct contrast to Duchamp's indifference to taste and rejection of finite definitions of visual art, a concerned Greenberg questions what becomes of taste levels when "art becomes the caviar to the general when the reality it imitates no longer corresponds even roughly to the reality recognized by the general."[111] He concludes that popular culture is only an imitation, a "plastic culture" of the authenticity found in the process of art. Greenberg, reflecting Adorno's theories of cultural stratification, states,

> There has always been on one side the minority of the powerful – and therefore the cultivated – and on the other the great mass of the exploited

---

[108]Ibid., 270.

[109]Greenberg, "Avant-Guard and Kitsch," 11.

[110]Ibid., 20, 12.

[111]Ibid., 18.

and poor – and therefore the ignorant. Formal culture has always belonged to the first, while the last have had to content themselves with folk or rudimentary culture, kitsch.[112]

Because it can be mechanically reproduced, the "ersatz culture" of kitsch comprises the largest majority of society's cultural understanding. For Greenberg, it threatens both individual and aesthetic authenticity in the fact that it is misleading on "many different levels, and some of them are high enough to be dangerous to the naïve seeker of true light." For Greenberg, kitsch is not only a threat to modern culture but to simple matters of good taste and authenticity.[113] In contrast to Greenberg's steadfast emphasis on formalism and cultural stratification, Harold Rosenberg rejects formalist aesthetic principles and asserts that art can be found "on the same aesthetic plane as ordinary artifacts." Rosenberg closely echoes Duchamp in arguing that "valid innovative art is equal to rejected art, for: '...only art officially cast aside can arouse in the spectator authentic feelings uncoerced by vested authority'." The audience can translate the art world's "aesthetic syntax" into their own individual terms that do have validity in society.[114] In art, Rosenberg asserts that the act and the experience supersede the final product and what is most important "is the revelation contained in the act." Taking a jab at Greenberg, Rosenberg contends that in art and in society, "the taste bureaucracies of Modern Art" should not discount the "human experience" of the audience.[115] In terms of taste, from a Foucauldian perspective, Marcel Duchamp opens these terms up to any aesthetic experience outside of every power

---

[112]Ibid., 17.

[113]Ibid., 13.

[114]Henry P. Raleigh, "At Odds with Contemporary Art: Harold Rosenberg's Book 'Art on the Edge'," *Leonardo* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 140.

[115]Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," (1952) from *The Tradition of the New*; available from http://www001.upp.so-net.ne.jp/artichoke/class/text/rosenberg.html; Internet; accessed 10 May 2007.

structure except the capitalist imperative. If a commodity on the mass market is endowed with

aesthetic value, we are all artists and become responsible for applying taste and defining

authenticity.[116]

On applying issues of taste to the Readymade, Marcel Duchamp said, "You have

to approach something with indifference, as if you had no aesthetic emotion. The choice

of Readymades is always based on visual indifference and, at the same time, on the total

absence of good or bad taste."[117] The Readymades hold an apathetic nature that is shared

by the manufactured commodity in that its neutrality is played upon by the

viewer/consumer as well as the context applied by the art/culture industry respectively.

Both the mass produced consumer product and the Readymade must be elevated, one in

the eyes of the consumer and the other in the eyes of the museum. Duchamp "flouted the

imperative of uniqueness" by considering replicas no less authentic than originals.[118]

Both are designated, not created, as authentic objects.[119] His linguistic and rhetorical

playfulness added a new dimension to the equation of art and commodity by "attempting

to master not only the commodity but also its means of communication, its language."[120]

By using objects that occupy the same space we see everyday in store windows, he tears

down the museum's scared space, but more importantly, forces the realization that both

aesthetic and individual authenticity can be social constructs.

Adorno also finds a "dialectical mediation of subject and object" in this world of

---

[116]Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 318.

[117]Cros, *Marcel Duchamp*, 55.

[118]Ann Temkin, "Infinte Jest," *Art News*. 98.5 (May 1999): 133.

[119]Ades, *Marcel Duchamp*, 154.

[120]Nesbit, "Last Words", 63.

consumption where he concludes, as Duchamp does, that traditional lexicon and jargon can not begin to define changing relationships between language and truth.[121] Yet when focusing on aesthetics in mass culture, Adorno notes, "It is nothing new to find that the Sublime becomes the cover for something low."[122] Not unlike Greenberg, he asks in Hegelian fashion if art can survive in a capitalist world, and if so, must it survive in a new form, under new terms. While humans are bound by identity, objects are bound by universal concepts and categorized meanings. Adorno conceives of a process of "negative-dialectics" or non-identity thinking that does away with categorization; if a concept can not identify its true object, the authenticity of the object, concept, and the viewer is implied by each to the other. Raymond Williams contends that when the process of reproduction brings art to the masses, culture becomes what occurs in daily life through consumers exhibiting agency. In constructing authenticity, consumers allow self-deception due to a want of identity. In a mass culture of manufactured needs, identity becomes defined by a recurrent theme of consumption.[123]

As Duchamp's work illustrates, when commodification becomes the subject and the object of art, the jargon of taste and of truth becomes pointless in a culture driven by strong consumer imperatives and commercial forces, leading to the commercialization of art itself.[124] Like Rosenberg, Duchamp sees this as an essential step in promoting progress by blurring the distinction between fine art and popular culture where novelty

[121]Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, vii.

[122]Ibid., xxi.

[123]Kammen, *American Culture*, 8-9.

[124]Ibid., 124.

and experimentation effect and eventually replace a historical structure.[125] In 1953,

Barnett Newman criticized the inclusion of Duchamp's work in the Museum of Modern

Art because of the Readymade's "popularizing role of entertainment" and Duchamp's

role in destroying "art by pointing to the fountain, and we now have museums that show

screwdrivers and automobiles and paintings. [The museums] have accepted this aesthetic

position that there's no way of knowing what is what."[126] Marcel Duchamp purchased the

object, used it in a new context, and gave it a description that did not describe it in

traditionally understood sign systems. "Objects with inscription" can still be found today

on the mass market.[127] To call a cellular phone a Razor or Chocolate provides something

ordinary with a new suggested value just as Duchamp had done with a snow shovel in *In*

Advance of a Broken Arm (See Figs. 6-8).
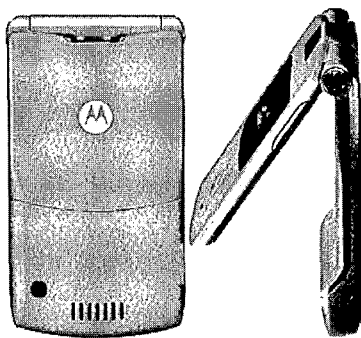
The Motorola RAZR

Figure 6. The Motorola RAZR
cellular phone. Advertisement,
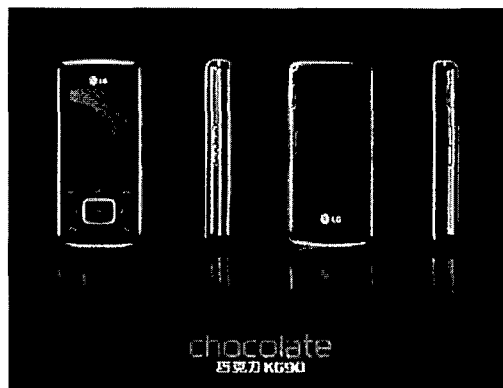2005.

chocolate

Figure 7. LG Chocolate
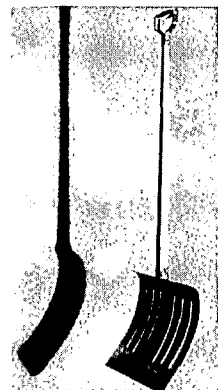cellular phone. Advertisement, 2006.

Figure 8. Marcel Duchamp.
In Advance of the Broken Arm.
1915/1964.

---

[125]Raleigh, "At Odds," 139.

[126]Barnett Newman quoted in John P. O'Neill, *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 247.

[127]Cros, *Marcel Duchamp*, 53.

Recognizing the fact that art's intrinsic value is all but destroyed by his Readymades, Duchamp once said, "You know, I like signing all those things - it devalues them."[128] The valuation of art converges with the commodity market, and thus "[v]alue is created through exchange, through the display, circulation, and consumption of the work, in a game where worth has no meaning in and of itself."[129] Peter Bürger states on this subject:

> When Duchamp signs mass-produced objects...and sends them to art exhibits, he negates the category of individual creation. The signature, whose very purpose it is to mark what is individual in the work, that it owes its existence to this particular artist, is inscribed on an arbitrarily chosen mass product, because all claims to individual creativity are to be mocked. Duchamp's provocation not only unmasks the art market where the signature means more than the quality of the work; it radically questions the very principle of art in bourgeois society according to which the individual is considered the creator of the work of art.[130]

Going as far as to create replicas of Readymades, Duchamp became what Amelia Jones defines as "a factory foreman...O.K.ing a product" with a simple signature that became a brand or by using a spokesperson ala R. Mutt or Rrose Sélavy, negating the need for an authentic face, name, and creator's hand to add inherent significance.[131] Social exchange is the force that produces artistic, monetary, and authentic value, all of which the artist understood and imbedded into the concepts of his work. By using mass-produced items as mediums, the critical discourse on value become virtually obsolete in the realm of high

---

[128]Marcel Duchamp quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride & The Bachelors: The Heretical Courtship in Modern Art* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 68.

[129]Dalia Judovitz, *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 163.

[130]Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Guard*, trans. M. Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 51-52.

[131]Jones, *Engendering of Marcel Duchamp*, 140.

art but transfer as a needed discourse in the public realm where the masses add value and authenticity to common objects.[132] This is perhaps best exhibited by the current consumer push that is changing the appearance of established mediums, such as the interfaces of user-authored web sites influencing book design and popular cable television altering traditional network television's method of delivery.

----

[132]Cros. *Marcel Duchamp*, 55.

CHAPTER IV

THE POSTMODERN TABLEAU

The works and principles of Marcel Duchamp translate as easily from a discourse

between Modernism and Postmodernity as they do between the art world and popular

culture. Issues of truth and taste addressed by the Readymades are clearly reflected in

consumer culture. Even as Duchamp worked in the 1930s, the role of the consumer

became a cultural imperative and consumption a necessity. Corporations, not academia,

gained cultural power to define the stratification of taste levels. While consumers do

acquire agency, they also are kept passive through the "privatization" of culture and the

manipulation of authenticity.[133]

According to Miles Orvell, when consumers seek authentic experience in products, it is

"as if there were some defect in everyday reality that had to be remedied by the more authentic

reality of the object to be consumed."[134] This imperative demonstrates the struggle faced in

society between what is represented to us and our own subjectivity. The significance of

Duchamp taking a functional object from its common utilitarian context and designating it with

aesthetic power is pivotal to the process of a commodity becoming a subjective *experience* in

the eyes of the public.[135] Umberto Eco stresses that "the whole of culture *should* be studied as a

communicative phenomenon" based on such systems of signification.[136]

---

[133]Kammen, *American Culture*, 55.

[134]Orvell, *The Real Thing,* 145.

[135]Steven Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp: Ambiguities of an Aesthetic Revolution," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42, no. 2 (1983): 198.

[136]Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 22.

As it is with viewers of Duchamp's works, the consumer is not assumed to be without the capacity for valid meaning making. The mimetic and projective qualities of expression applied to commodities exhibit the same value added to a signed toilet in a gallery. When this occurs, Steven Goldsmith begs the question, "Do common objects rise to art, or does art fall to the everyday?" His answer is that "Duchamp's experiment abolishes the line between art and anything else, rendering art a useless and arbitrary label. All objects become works of art, just as all works of art become not-so-extraordinary objects."[137] Arturo Schwarz sees the chasm between the artist and the everyman dissolving once "every man is endowed with the faculty of creating beauty." In relation to the Readymade, when applying authenticity to a common object occurs, "the very distinction between life and art is abolished."[138]

The agency of the consumer audience becomes a valid aspect and useful trope for the culture industry. In contrast to the Frankfort School's theories of media and popular culture, the Birmingham School in London took a populist approach to contemporary culture studies in the 1960s. Critics associated with the group such as Stuart Hall, George Lipsitz, and Lawrence W. Levine concluded that people are at once producers and consumers of culture. In line with Duchamp's own conceptual notions, these critics championed the creative "act of consumption and emphasized the concept of 'appropriation', allowing consumers to chose aspects of media messages that are meaningful to them and then 'recycling' them to suit their own needs."[139] Reception

[137]Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp," 199.

[138]Schwarz, *The Complete Works*, 41.

[139]Kammen, *American Culture*, 210-211.

theory prescribes that the audience is active, not passive. The media industry does encode a message but the audience can decode it differently. The viewers become "active interpreters" of an industry that "assigns importance to each audience member's frame of mind, legitimate motives, interests, and values." Consumers are not oppressed by popular culture but engaged with it. In the face of such re-presentation and recycling, Baudrillard laments that the media has destroyed reality in stages: "first they *reflected* it; then they *masked* and perverted it; next they had to *mask* its *absence*; and finally they produced instead the *simulacrum* of the real." Linda Hutcheon responds by asking if we have ever "known the 'real' except through representations." Our senses may perceive it "but do we *know* it in the sense that we give meaning to it?"[140] As the basis for Duchampian authenticity, such inquiries are answered and reaffirmed at once in respect to the valid subjective meaning applied to the inauthentic.

<center>Interpreting Subject and Interpreted Object</center>

As a critique of Enlightenment, Postmodernity assumes one cannot know one's self; there is no absolute truth. Authenticity is no longer fixed when the language of representation cannot capture a reality that exists objectively. As Walter Kauffman states, returning to Kierkegaard's notion of authenticity and the subjective, "The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said."[141] Cultural shifts have determined that the subjective accent is now a part of our everyday lexicon. This holds true in both the aesthetic realm and in mass culture. Derrida stresses this point in

---

[140]Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, 31.

[141]Kaufmann, *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, 116.

respect to the viewer of art when he states, "The painting of the truth can be adequate to its model, in representing it, but it does not manifest it *itself*, in presenting it."[142] Truth and authenticity are formed through a process of "presentation *or* representation, unveiling *or* adequation" proceeding like a discourse through many modes.[143] In this exchange, how does a consumer attribute and receive meaning to construct identity? By "offering opportunities for meaning" according to the need for self-making,[144] the media has a hand in it by attributing affordances that allow the viewer/user to interpret what the perceived object can furnish them. Adorno acknowledges this attribution, stating that "the essence of a thing is not anything that is arbitrarily made by subjective thought, is not a distilled unity of characteristics....this becomes the aura of the authentic: an element of the concept becomes the absolute concept."[145] Duchamp's Readymades serve as an exploded microcosm to underscore this "natural struggle between the representation and the acknowledgement of our subjectivity."[146]

Donald Hall describes subjectivity as "that tension between choice and illusion, between imposed definitions and individual interrogations of them." In our current consumer society, "we are commonly asked to rethink, express, and explain our identities by a wide variety of authority figures and institutions."[147] Advertisers, corporations, and

---

[142]Jacque Derrida, *The Truth in Painting,* trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian Mcleod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 5.

[143]Ibid., 6.

[144]Charles Kostelnick and Michael Hassett, *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003) 224-225.

[145]Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, 124.

[146]Cavell, "Sights and Sounds," 564.

[147]Donald E. Hall, *Subjectivity (The New Critical Idiom)* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

peer groups induce consumers to "find themselves" in commodities as a means of self-expression. Duchamp's innovative Readymade process can also be evaluated as a model of Self in this process of designation and reification. Duchamp's subjects are already objects that can withstand objectification as well as self-appropriation. These works, as extensions of Self, are models "of subjectivity produced and reproduced in the repetitions of unconscious compulsion."[148]

In Adorno's view, the gradual preference for technical media by the mass public signifies that "authenticity is no longer a logical element mediated by subjectivity but is something in the subject…something objectively discoverable."[149] Adorno's critical theory presents an aesthetic that privileges the subject over the object. Any object is given the reverence afforded art by being placed in a subjective context of authenticity. As with the Readymades, form gives way to concept. Its importance and created aura lies outside of its physicality. Like a product of good marketing, Steven Goldsmith notes that "the Readymade is more than a physical object; it has qualities inaccessible to the senses. It can be 'daring, impudent, irreverent, witty, clever'." Unlike a typical utilitarian object, it is endorsed with meaning that even a replica delivers in the same fashion.[150]

By applying formal authenticity to objects, they can "transcend the vulgar world of use and change."[151] Arthur Danto, in his work *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* points to Duchamp as the one "who first performed the subtle miracle of transforming… objects from

---

[148]Joselit, *Infinite Regress,* 196.

[149]Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity.* 126.

[150]Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp," 200.

[151]Ibid., 199.

the *Lebenswelt* of commonplace existence."[152] To use a Readymade as an illustrative example,

Steven Goldsmith states, "The difference between a urinal in the museum's bathroom and a

urinal in the museum's modern sculpture gallery is that the latter possesses a hidden essence of

aesthetic idea and meaning the former entirely lacks."[153] It is the ethos of the latter example that

the culture industry strives to mold around their products to transfer meaning to the consumer.

Authenticity is assigned to "a world of interpreted things." With this interpretability, Goldsmith

can find "no reason why it is inconceivable that someone could find meaning, formal or

philosophical, in *any* urinal."[154]

At the moment when the consumer assumes agency to decode and reconceptualize, a

new form of authenticity is gained. When an object such as a snow shovel is elevated into a

new context, addressing issues of an object's nature and social function, it argues a new

narrative while also becoming an artifact of a "distinctly modern practice of

decontextualization and recontextualization."[155] As opposed to using the Readymade to

materialize or objectify, Duchamp lets loose "the material signifier from its conceptual

signified" in an exchange that allows for subjective communication.[156] The privileged position

of the original is upended. With this simulacrum in place, Lyotard notes that it is not necessary

to "supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented."[157] In

---

[152]Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard University Press, 1981), vi.

[153]Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp," 202.

[154]Ibid., 204.

[155]Jeffrey Schnapp, Michael Shanks, and Matthew Tiews. "Archaeology, Modernism, Modernity," *Modernism/Modernity* 11, no. 1 (2004): 2.

[156]Joselit, *Infinite Regress,* 81.

[157]Jean-François Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge" in *Theory and History of Literature*, Vol. 2, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 81.

the context of semiotics, there are no longer signifieds; the truth is only a matter of language

used to represent it and can only reference other symbols. Duchamp's selection of work is

analogous to the moment paint is put to canvas; its sentiment is tangible in presence and the

commodity object becomes the communication. In Kantian terms, "internal difference" is not

present and the communication must be perceived by the "empirical intuition" of the viewer.[158]

Of such an exchange, Baudrillard states,

> It is no longer the subject who represents the world to itself (*I will be your
> mirror*), the object refracts the subject and subtly, using all our technologies,
> imposes its presence and its aleatory form…The object as a strange attractor is
> no longer an aesthetic object.[159]

The object moves beyond aesthetics to speak in more intimate terms to the consumer. In

this quest for individual truth and authenticity, the commodity in the hands of marketing groups

and the media "renders truth claims irrelevant" by altering visual contexts to present

constructed and transferable experiences.

Duchampian Authenticity and the Subsidized Consumer

Marcel Duchamp's work signals "a transposition, spanning some thirty years, from the

Readymade to *matter* caught in the commodity's cycle of sublimation and desublimation to the

Readymade as a model of the self constituted by a compulsion to repeat or reproduce itself."[160]

In effect, Duchampian authenticity "represents the modern (and postmodern) self as a subject

constituted in relation to its desire for and identification with commodities." Commodification

is a transitory state, "a relay of identifications between subjects and objects…repeated within

---

[158]de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp*. 108.

[159]Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art*, 122-123.

[160]Joselit, *Infinite Regress,* 195.

the transactual field of the marketplace."[161]

Citing Duchamp as a basis for injecting the idea into art, Baudrillard states, "All modern art is conceptual in the sense that it fetishizes the concept, the stereotype of a cerebral model of art in the work – in exactly the same way that what is fetishized in commodity is not its real value but the abstract stereotype of value."[162] Duchamp's experiments demonstrate such a dialectic exchange. Items that are perpetually "reproduced, mimicked, adulterated, and otherwise manufactured for mass consumption should come as no surprise in a culture forever wedded to a dialectic between authenticity and imitation."[163] The tension between the two forces is a mainstay of popular culture, where imitation, advertising, and mechanical/digital reproduction forge an authentic ideal.[164] While the aura of authenticity, as pursued by theorists, involved "a sense of distance and difference," *created* authenticity is a gesture that requires intimacy and democratic exchange.[165] Derrida argues that what goes into a work of art ("the frame, the title, the signature, the legend, etc.") cannot suppress "the *internal* order of discourse on paintings, its works, its commerce, its evaluations, its surplus-values, its speculation, its laws, and its hierarchies"; all are internal orders of discourse also communicated by commodities.[166] Like art, a product in the media is "rendered" and "experienced." A market entity with added value must "be partly tangible and partly intangible, without

---

[161]Ibid., 196.

[162]Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art*, 126.

[163]Orvell, *The Real Thing,* 299.

[164]Ibid., xv.

[165]Schnapp, Shanks, and Tiews, "Archaeology, Modernism, Modernity," 11.

[166] Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 9.

diminishing the importance of either characteristic" in order to be more than just an object in the minds of the viewing public.[167]

A product, like a Readymade, is "a vehicle for the communication of ideas." These "mere real things" as Arthur Danto calls them, become "carriers of meaning."[168] When an object becomes privileged through careful manipulation, the physicality and "cultural influence of good or bad taste" have been surpassed to make an *experience* out of a mass produced item. It cannot be removed from the historical, physical, and cultural baggage that shapes visual communication, so it must transform and meld that framework in a new way to assign authenticity.[169] When removed from the political criteria of beauty, the authenticity of items becomes judged in terms of taste and financial value in a market of "cultural policy." By endowing objects with aesthetic experience, the public judges and approves as a force of authority in the capitalist economy. In terms of the Kantian notion of reflective judgment, Lyotard sees a negotiation "between the capacity to conceive and the capacity to present an object corresponding to the concept" to determine taste and assign authenticity. In essence, it is to make the invisible perceptive and conceivable, to render "an allusion" real "by means of visual presentations."[170]

Duchampian authenticity requires one to be "self-made or self-actualized," accepting "a *responsibility* for creating one's self" out of the codified items available on the mass market.[171] All subsidized consumers transformed by this are subject to

---

[167]G. Lynn Shostack, "Breaking Free from Product Marketing," *Journal of Marketing* 41, no. 2 (April 1977): 73-74.

[168]Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Harvard University Press, 1981) quoted in Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp." 198.

[169]Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp," 201.

[170]Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition," 76-78.

[171]Hall, *Subjectivity*, 13.

advertising as a form of art that is "based on information exchange and interactivity."[172]

Umberto Eco stresses the commodity's force in this exchange. He points to three

characteristics that aid in the definition of cultural authenticity via such communication:

"(a) the production and employment of objects used for transforming the relationship

between man and nature; (b) kinship relations as the primary nucleus of institutionalized

social relations; (c) the economic exchange of goods."[173] In this "economic exchange of

goods," it is the power that capitalism "inherently possesses…to derealize familiar

objects, social roles and institutions to such a degree that the so-called realistic

representation can no longer evoke reality."[174] In advertising to the subsidized consumer,

it is more important that an object acquires a form of social communication to win over

"the public consciousness than succeed as a commodity."[175]

Replicating Duchamp's act of choosing (essential to the Readymade), the consumer

"does not create, in the traditional sense of the word, but chooses from among the objects of the

industrial world." The consumer, in decoding the commodity, *is* concerned with visual

difference as well as issues of taste and aesthetics as defined by advertisers.[176] According to

Northrop Frye, modern advertising presents to us "a kind of sentimental idealism, an attempt to

present conventionally attractive or impressive appearance as an actual or attainable reality."[177]

A new reality is achieved when objects acquire new contexts and characteristics;

---

[172]Margot Lovejoy, "Art, Technology, and Postmodernism: Paradigms, Parallels, and Paradoxes," *Art Journal* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 262.

[173]Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, 21.

[174]Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition," 74.

[175]Lovejoy, "Art, Technology, and Postmodernism," 259.

[176]Ramírez, *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even*, 26-27.

[177]Northrop Frye, *The Modern Century* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1967), 26.

transubstantiation occurs.[178] Modern advertising has perfected the Duchampian act of

animating "the inanimate commodity with the appearance of life," thus creating "an illusion of

equality while preserving hierarchies."[179]

Jackson Lears points out that, in the 1920s, when copywriters requested to sign

the ads they wrote, "agency executives indignantly refused, observing that the ad was

meant to represent the client's 'personality,' not the copywriter's."[180] Signatures for

Marcel Duchamp were also a matter of transference. By signing Readymades as Rrose

Sélavy or R. Mutt, he removes the traditional hand of the artist as genius creator of an

original authentic experience; it becomes the viewers' role to create meaning around the

representation. The media's ability to employ the consumer as interpreter of life led

Marshall McLuhan to classify it as the "folklore of industrial man."[181] Through

commercials and ads, a bland item on a shelf surrounded by similar items is separated by

new authentic manufactured social meaning, value, and use. It serves as a cultural

reference point to the consumer, who gains authenticity by choosing/purchasing the

product.[182] According to Lears, in these defamiliarizing familiar objects, the consumer

finds "a moment that would call into question the given facticity of the existing social

world and promote the hope of transcending it." Such a Sublime moment which Walter

Benjamin called a "profane illumination" is a social construct. The consumer must feel

---

[178]Michel Foucault, *This Is Not A Pipe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 38-39.

[179]Lears, "Uneasy Courtship: Modern Art and Modern Advertising," *American Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1987): 136-137.

[180]Ibid., 138.

[181]Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1951) quoted in Lears, "Uneasy Courtship" 139.

[182]Lovejoy, "Art, Technology, and Postmodernism," 259.

that a sense of reality is eroded while at the same time, acknowledging that what remains is the opportunity for recreating a fresh self-authored authenticity and social image, acquired simply through an act of economic exchange.[183]

A Simulacra in Just the Right Size

Our reality is created and acquires meaning via sign systems that allow us to make sense of our world. Through manipulating our realities, the mass media causes assigned authenticity to rely on discourses and interpretations rather than concrete definitions.[184] Through the removal of an immediate physical context and by tying appearance to a push and pull of visual and conceptual reception, the culture industry has perfected the "production of a truth."[185] The most important function of Duchamp's Readymade is "the conferring of the status of art upon an object" to produce truth where it was previously absent.[186] Art, in the traditional sense, has authenticity. The Readymade assumes authenticity. The commodity assumes and then applies authenticity to its consumers. As Duchamp achieves with the Readymades, media abstracts the physical and always remains "one step removed from tangibility." By "adding abstract qualities to tangible goods," the media produce simulacra of authenticity transferable to the buyer upon purchase.[187]

At the intersection of capitalism and modernism, advertising functions in our society

---

[183]Lears, "Uneasy Courtship," 145.

[184]Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, 31.

[185]Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 7-9.

[186]Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp," 205.

[187]Shostack, "Breaking Free from Product Marketing," 79-80.

and our economy as a force to determine commodity style and consumer image. It provides "a model by which social powerlessness can be experienced as gratification."[188] In matters of advertising and art, Jackson Lears, like Duchamp, sees issues of taste transcended, claiming "a basic impulse behind aesthetic activity is a desire to redeem everyday utilitarian drabness, to leaven the lump of the routine and commonplace, to glimpse a cosmos of hope amid the kingdom of necessity." This consumer imperative towards "transcendence, however brief and fragmentary" lends authenticity to modern life.[189] Marketing presents an ideal as obtainable. Shostack illustrates this point by musing, "If only tropical islands and redwood forests *could* be purchased for the price of an airline ticket."[190] Images are delicately structured for marketing to a target group of consumers in the hopes that notions of originality and youth embedded in a product's image will transfer to the consumer's sense of self-construction.[191]

When Roland Barthes poses the question of "how meaning gets into an image, where does it end? And if it ends, what is there beyond?"[192] He concludes that "signs, endlessly deferring their foundations, transforming their signifieds into new signifiers, indefinitely citing one another" lead to an incessant process of recycling, re-presenting, and reinterpretation.[193] This media-reflexive gesture illustrates Nietzsche's eternal return of the same wherein the literal "same" does not reoccur, but there is a constant flux in which we must all "find ourselves" again. There is a self-referential nature found in

---

[188]Gerald Graff, *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 92.

[189]Lears, "Uneasy Courtship," 141.

[190]Shostack, "Breaking Free from Product Marketing," 75.

[191]Ibid., 77.

[192]Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32.

[193]Ibid., 167-168.

perpetual reproductions that allows for authenticity. The media also has a language of replication all its own. Marketers, corporations and the like are finely attuned to cultural trends. They "inflate those inferences" found in a small group "into assumptions and project the assumptions back into the wider culture" via a honed visual rhetoric that causes the process to then gain "a life of its own, feeding on itself, replicating itself" replicating products, and replicating culture onto culture.[194]

In the view of Baudrillard, all objects given over to commodification and advertising in the guise of "make-believe" constantly shift images of "self-display" over to measurements of "self-valuation." The theorist does not hesitate to classify advertisers as being in the business of "the clowning of commodity and its staging" that turns "the world into a phantasmagoria of which we all are fascinated victims."[195] In terms of fascination, television is the perfect readymade medium for the "postmodern consciousness." It has become our outlet for "culture and ideology" altering "our concepts of space, simultaneity, and individuality" aside from radically calling into question the authenticity of reality itself. Like the Readymades, the media presents "information and theatrical effects...mixed with the totally banal." In television, "art, culture, politics, science, etc. are brought together...outside of their usual contexts and connections...to create a vast meltdown of forms within the public consciousness."[196] For Lovejoy, the computer is also "both a tool and a medium" in the tradition of Duchamp's Readymades. It bridges concept, art, and information "into a range of completely new aspects of image processing, simulation, control, fabrication, and interaction" for the consumer. In the fact that it acts "as an interface between other tools to expand or control their use," a

---

[194]Lears, "Uneasy Courtship," 139.

[195]Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art*, 122.

[196]Lovejoy, "Art, Technology, and Postmodernism," 261.

computer's representation of a natural authenticity "has implication far more complex than those imposed by a printing press or a camera."[197]

Returning to concepts of authenticity in light of such subjective everyday experiences, Donald Hall finds that subjectivity is not as closely related to the consciousness of identity as some Existentialist philosophers would have liked to believe. Subjectivity allows us to exert agency in order to see how identity is formed and how it is politicized. Conscious decisions allow or disavow the process of self-making based on the created authenticity surrounding commodities.[198] Yet it must be acknowledged that "if a toilet or a bottle rack can provide rewarding formal satisfaction, anything can."[199] Like Duchamp's Readymade, a product's principal significance is to confer status to the viewer/user in a paradoxical fashion that becomes accepted as comfortable.[200] A plurality develops out of this discourse that allows for a "broader perspective on political and cultural possibilities" and on individual freedom as well. If nothing else about mass media and advertising can claim to be genuine, it does provide an applied authentic "aesthetic experience of visual discourse that restates, reframes, reconstructs human image" thereby affecting the whole of society.[201]

Lyotard stresses that identity and social approval are tied in with being able to decode communication and image structures. When mass media employs tools of high art and academia to achieve something like kitsch, the authenticity constructed around items

[197]Ibid., 261.

[198]Hall, *Subjectivity*, 3.

[199]Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp," 198.

[200]Ibid., 207.

[201]Lovejoy, "Art, Technology, and Postmodernism," 262.

can be "the appropriate remedy for the anxiety and depression that the public experiences."[202] While self-deception is decried in the search for authenticity (in the traditional man-as-one-with-nature sense), it arises from a distinct longing for identity.[203] When advertising endows "toasters and toothpaste with numinous significance" and the consumer feels that he or she has no significant identity, then "redemption comes not though resort to a sacred realm of High Art but through immersion in the most fleeting, contingent, and even banal details of everyday life."[204] The media has mastered processes of replicating reality and aesthetic value. By designating and inflating authenticity through powerful visual, historical, and emotional applications of value, our desire for social and individual meaning is beckoned. The consumer, bestowed with agency and choice, appropriates these socially produced meanings to become a cultural production themselves, a Readymade consumer.

---

[202]Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition," 74-75.

[203]Kaufmann, *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, 44.

[204]Lears, "Uneasy Courtship," 145.

CONCLUSION

Many theories and investigations have been applied to Marcel Duchamp and his works in discourses within the art world. Through an interdisciplinary approach, I have sought to reinterpret the artist and his Readymades in order to build a mimetic chain asserting the social function of his works within the realm of popular culture. I have also contended that notions of authenticity and the inauthentic dissolve when applied to the negotiated experience that occurs between commodities and the consumer. A new term, Duchampian authenticity, has been proposed to define this condition of visual communication.

As opposed to viewing the Readymade as a response to popular culture, our modern social conditions should be viewed as a response to the Readymade. Commodities communicate using a language translated by Duchamp through models of repetition that confer and infer endowed authenticity. When one initially views a Readymade, it is recognized as a familiar mass-produced object. The artist endows a certain level of importance to the object by means of a signature or a high art visual context. Yet, it is only when the viewer applies substance and originality to the work and to its subsequent multiples that it acquires authenticity. In that same manner, when the media presents a commodity, a mass-produced multiple with a certain aura of uniqueness and emotional connection provided by the culture industry, the process of valuation must be completed by the consumer's ultimate endowment of significance. Duchamp's Readymades illustrate the discourse that constitutes "individual decision and selection," providing direct insight into the commodity/consumer exchange process.[205] It is evident

---

[205]Cros, *Marcel Duchamp*, 257

through my research that the consumer, therein, becomes part of the readymade process. By designating significance to a mass-produced product, transference occurs wherein the consumer also becomes signified and authenticated.

The arguments for what constitutes an authentic self and an authentic experience need to be revisited and restructured in light of the conceptual and aesthetic dialogues communicated by the commodity form presented in this work. By closely examining a range of theories on subjectivity and identity, I have deduced that subjective authenticity is negotiated "between choice and illusion, between imposed definitions and individual interrogations of them." On the surface, objects of mass culture are meaningless and lack authenticity. Our own subjectivity, allowing us to see how identity is formed, permits us to exert agency and attribute meaning, not only to commodities but also to ourselves. Therein, the Duchampian authenticated commodity allows for cultural representation and self-making.[206]

The constant reshaping that occurs between the media and the audience is imperative to understanding Duchamp's role in affecting popular culture. Advertisers remove the "everydayness" from the mass-produced object's context and impart it with a higher attributed value recognized by the audience. This process initiates the rhetoric of designation and detection of difference for the audience.[207] Duchampian authenticity is gained by a mass-produced product in the same manner that high art is produced from a generic object by Duchamp's Readymades. The product assumes the identity of the consumer's choosing. Likewise, the consumer assumes the identity of the product's orchestrated aura. When

---

[206]Hall, *Subjectivity*, 1-3.

[207]Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 118-119.

addressing the importance of the viewer at a lecture given for the American Federation of Art in 1957 entitled "The Creative Act," Marcel Duchamp said, "It's the viewers who make the pictures…The masterpiece is declared in the final analysis by the spectator." He stressed that this negotiated experience "is 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." In the end, Duchamp gave "the latter as much importance as the one who makes it."[208]

While Duchamp's works have been absorbed back into the fray of high art, the effects of his experiments are lasting in larger cultural venues. In an ironic twist to the notion of Duchampian authenticity, a mass-produced reproduction poster print of *L.H.O.O.Q.* is sold in New York's Museum of Modern Art gift shop. The work of high art, produced from a copy of a work of high art, has become a copy again, continuing the cycle of the commodity/consumer exchange. I have defined new investigations into Duchamp and his Readymades that reveal connections often unnoticed in traditional arguments that tend toward more narrow focuses on aesthetic practices. As Derrida points out, discourses on art are "perhaps destined to reproduce the limit which constitutes them."[209] I have ultimately argued for a movement of discourses on Marcel Duchamp into the wider realm of popular culture with a new term, Duchampian authenticity, as a catalyst for future investigations and applications into the process of self-making in a mass-produced market of planned obsolescence.

---

[208]Marcel Duchamp quoted from "The Creative Act," a lecture given at the meeting of the American Federation of Art, Houston (April 1957) in de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp*, 401.

[209]Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 11.

REFERENCES

Ades, Dawn, Neil Cox, and David Hopkins. *Marcel Duchamp*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Adorno, Theodor. *The Jargon of Authenticity*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1958.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. 350 B.C.E. Trans. by W. D. Ross. Available from http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.html. Internet; accessed 24 March 2007.

Baron, Robert A. "Mona Lisa Images for a Modern World." 2001. Available from http://www.studiolo.org/Mona/MONALIST.htm. Internet; accessed 20 March 2007.

Barr, Jr., Alfred H., ed. *Fantastic Art, Dada, & Surrealism*. New York: Arno Press, 1968.

Barthes, Roland. *Image Music Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.

_____. *The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays*. ed. Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 2005.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." 1936. Trans. Andy Blunden. 1998. Available fromhttp://www.marxists.org/ reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm. Internet; accessed 18 April 2007.

Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Guard*. Trans. M. Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Buskirk, Martha, "Thoroughly Modern Marcel." *October* 70 (1994): 113-125.

Cabanne, Pierre. *Duchamp & Co*. Trans. Peter Snowden. Paris: Pierre Terrail Press, 1997.

Cavell, Stanley. "Sights and Sounds: from *The World View*," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, & Ronald Roblin. 560-575. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Cros, Caroline. *Marcel Duchamp.* Trans. Vivian Rehberg. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2006.

Danto, Arthur. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Descartes, René. *Discourse of Method.* Part IV, 1637. Available from http://www.literature.org/authors/descartes-rene/reason-discourse/ chapter-04.html. Internet; accessed 20 March 2007.

Derrida, Jacque. *The Truth in Painting.* Trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian Mcleod. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Dickie, George. "The New Institutional Theory of Art," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology,* eds. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, & Ronald Roblin, 196-205. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Notes from Underground* (1864) in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre,* ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann, 52-82. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975.

Duve, Thierry de. *Kant After Duchamp.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996.

Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979.

_____. *History of Beauty.* Trans. Alastair McEwen. New York: Rizzoli, 2004.

Forbes, H.D. "Rousseau, Ethnicity, and Difference," in *The Legacy of Rousseau,* ed. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov, 220-245. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Foucault, Michel. *This is Not a Pipe.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Frye, Northrop. *The Modern Century.* Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1967.

Goldsmith, Steven. "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp: Ambiguities of an Aesthetic Revolution." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42, no. 2 (1983): 197-208.

Graff, Gerald. *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Greenberg, Clement, ed. "Avant-Guard and Kitsch," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays,* 6-22. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

Grene, Marjorie. "Authenticity: An Existential Virtue." *Ethics* 62, no. 4 (1952): 266-274.

Gurstein, Rochelle. "The Mystic Smile: Becoming Mona Lisa." *Arts & Opinions* 2, no. 1 (2003). Available from http://www.artsandopinion.com/2003_v2_n1/ gurstein.htm. Internet; accessed 23 April 2007.

Habermas, Jürgen. "Modernity – An Incomplete Project" in *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. Thomas Docherty. 98-109. New York: Harvester Wheatsheat, 1993.

Hall, Donald E. *Subjectivity (The New Critical Idiom)*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Jones, Amelia. *Postmodernism and the Engendering of Marcel Duchamp.* Ed. Norman Bryson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Joselit, David. *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp 1910-1941*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998.

Judovitz, Dalia. *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit.* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.

Kammen, Michael. *American Culture American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century.* New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Kaufmann, Walter. Ed. and trans. *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Philosophical Fragments*. 1844. Trans. and ed. Howard and Edna Hong, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

_____. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. 1846. Trans. David Swenson. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Kostelnick, Charles and Michael Hassett. *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.

Krauss, Rosalind E. "Reinventing the Medium." *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 2 (1999): 289-305.

Lears, Jackson. "Uneasy Courtship: Modern Art and Modern Advertising." *American Quarterly* 39, no.1 (1987): 133-154.

_____. *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America.* New York: Basic Books, 1994.

Lebel, Robert. *Marcel Duchamp*. New York: Paragraphic Books, 1959.

Lovejoy, Margot. "Art, Technology, and Postmodernism: Paradigms, Parallels, and Paradoxes." *Art Journal* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 257-265.

Lyotard, Jean-François. "The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge" in *Theory and History of Literature* Vol 2, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. 73-82. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

McLuhan, Marshall. *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*. New York, Vanguard Press, 1951.

Meggs, Philip B., ed. *A History of Graphic Design*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1992.

Nesbit, Molly. "Last Words (Rilke, Wittgenstein, Duchamp)." *Art History* 21, no. 4 (1998): 546-564.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Human, All Too Human," (1878) in *The Portable Nietzsche* ed. & trans. by Walter Kaufmann, 51-63. New York: Penguin, 1975.

_____. "The Challenge of Every Great Philosophy," (1874) in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann. 122-125. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975.

_____. "The Beginning of *The Will To Power*," (1901) in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, 130-132. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975.

_____. "Apollinian and Dionysian Art from *The Birth of Tragedy*," (1872) in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, ed. George Dickie, Richard Sclafani, and Ronald Roblin, 471-485. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.

O'Neill, John P. *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

Ortega y Gasset, José. "Man Has No Nature," (1941) in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Weyl, Clark, and Atkinson, 152-157. New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1975.

Orvell, Miles. *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Plato. *Apology* in *The Dialogues of Plato* Vol. 2, trans. Benjamin Jowett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892. Available from http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_ staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=766&chapter=93694&layout=html&Itemid =27. Internet; accessed 18 March 2007.

Rajagopal, Arvind. "The Violence of Commodity Aesthetics: Hawkers, Demolition Raids and A New Regime of Consumption." *Social Text* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 91-113.

Raleigh, Henry P. "At Odds with Contemporary Art: Harold Rosenberg's Book 'Art on the Edge'." *Leonardo* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 138-140.

Ramírez, Juan Antonio. *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even.* London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1998.

Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters," (1952) from *The Tradition of the New.* Available from http://www001.upp.so-net.ne.jp/artichoke/class/text/rosenberg.html. Internet; accessed 10 May 2007.

Sanouillet, Michel and Elmer Peterson, eds. *Writings of Marcel Duchamp.* New York: DeCapo Press, 1973.

Schnapp, Jeffrey, Michael Shanks, and Matthew Tiews. "Archaeology, Modernism, Modernity." *Modernism/Modernity* 11, no. 1 (2004): 1-16.

Shostack, G. Lynn. "Breaking Free from Product Marketing." *Journal of Marketing* 41, no. 2 (April 1977): 73-80.

Schwarz, Arturo., ed. *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp.* New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 2000.

Strinati, Dominic. *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture.* 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 1995.

Temkin, Ann. "Infinite Jest." *Art News* 98, no. 5 (May 1999): 133.

Tomkins, Calvin. *The World of Marcel Duchamp.* New York: Time Inc., 1966.

_____. *The Bride and The Bachelors: The Heretical Courtship in Modern Art.* New York: Viking Press, 1965.

Turner, Richard A. *Inventing Leonardo.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Weitz, Morris, ed. *Problems in Aesthetics.* Albany: Macmillan Company, 1970.

VITA

Terra D'An Rudisill
Institute of Humanities
BAL 406
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23429

D'An Rudisill   She earned her BFA in

Graphic Design from Appalachian State University (Boone, North Carolina) in 1999. She

has worked as a print, web, and multimedia designer for advertising agencies,

universities, non-profit organizations, major corporations, as well as the federal

government. Her academic focuses include visual communication, semiotics, visual

rhetoric, as well as the evolution of design and advertising in popular culture and new

media. She is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society and AIGA.