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WAR AS (SURREALISTIC) FARCE

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DIDIER GIRARD

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ABSTRACT

10 The purpose of this paper is to show that using war (here, the Second World War in Europe as fictionalised by Edward James in his 1939 surrealist novel *Richman, Poorman, Beggarman, Wop*) as subject matter for fiction does not always aim to reveal heroic values and virtues, or even to sublimate collective human tragedies, but can also show nothing but a heterogeneous mindset that tackles festering ideologies which are on the decline and displaces them into a non-cathartic situation. The product at the end of the fictional assembly line is no longer a representation but a vain and simulated attempt at a matter-of-fact presentation (however impossible this is in the absolute). This insight is then used to tackle a few problematic examples, taken from the field of contemporary visual arts, of recent grotesque treatments of war.

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20 *Keywords:* James, Edward; propaganda; Surrealism; Second World War fiction; simulation; satire; grotesque; literality; displacement

25 ST ANDREWS, 7 JULY 2007.¹ Less than two weeks ago, shaken by the horror of acts of terror and terrorists in London, I found myself irresistibly drawn to two major exhibitions, one at the V&A, entitled “Surreal Things”, and the other at Tate Modern, “Dalí and Film”.² Having just published the first anthology of Dalí’s poetry³ – translated from various European languages – I had all these strange sayings by the Catalan maestro swirling in my head, such as “Don’t cure your anxieties, feed them!”, so I thought that viewing exhibitions on surrealism might provide some healthy nourishment to help me swallow my disturbing perception of the current warped and warlike state of the world. “Europe and its others” is, indeed, the result of what Michael Gratzke referred to at the “Europe and its Others” conference as agonistic encounters – in other words, idiotic encounters and haphazard accidents and circumstances which make humanistic forms of communication more problematic. That made me realise that the old environmentalist credo “Think global, act local” was pure nonsense, so I thought it might be interesting to try it the other way round, and adopt “Act global, think local” as a much more pragmatic motto. At that point I began to look closely at details and signs which were actually, physically, undoubtedly present around me.

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40 One striking feature was that although about half of the paintings and objects exhibited at the V&A were inspired by and had – at one point or another – belonged to the poet Edward James (1907–1984), his name hardly appeared in

45 the exhibits' otherwise verbose captions. The son of a mother born into a family of Scottish aristocrats (the Forbes from Castle Newe) and an English father with many Irish-American relations who belonged to a long line of immensely successful opportunistic entrepreneurs, Edward James was a true polyglot raised in squalid Edwardian splendour, a polymorphous perverse poly-
 50 math, and an indefatigable traveller within and outside Europe. He was also a dilettante architect, a dedicated poet and an individual who was "madder than all the other surrealists put together – the real thing" if we are to believe his friend Salvador Dalí.⁴ Despite such a high profile, Edward Frank Willis James is very little known in academic circles – particularly in England where he is merely referred to as a rich collector and a hopeless millionaire. But then, it is a
 55 well-known fact that, to quote the title of one of Herbert Read's articles, by European standards, "the English have no taste":

60 My title is deliberate, and exact. I do not say that the English have bad taste – that, perhaps, might be said of other nations – but simply that they do not exercise those faculties of sensibility and selection which make for good taste. Our condition is neutral – an immense indifference to questions of art.⁵

65 The purpose of this paper is to show that using war (in this case the Second World War) as subject matter for fiction does not always aim to reveal heroic values and virtues or even to sublimate collective human tragedies with winners and losers in the end. Using war as subject matter for fiction can be considered for what it *also* shows – nothing but a heterogeneous mindset that tackles festering ideologies that are on the decline by displacing them into a non-cathartic situation. The product at the end of the fictional assembly line is then no longer
 70 a representation but a vain and simulated attempt at a matter-of-fact presentation (however impossible this is in the absolute, of course). This will eventually lead us to a few problematic examples, taken from the field of the visual arts, of grotesque contemporary artistic treatments of war, showing it *as it is* (fantasies included) and no longer as the result of an ideologically-motivated aesthetic representation.⁶

75 In the Western European cultural landscape of the twenties and thirties, politics and aesthetics rarely combined and when they did, they led to impossible or apocalyptic systems. Characteristically, the political dimension of artistic gestures in this period, whether pictorial, musical or literary, inevitably boiled down to what Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla have called "an outraged reaction" with very little concern to offer alternative political agendas of any coherence. Quoting Laurent Tailhade, the authors of this classic study on futuristic move-
 80 ments highlight the question which can be heard behind almost every manifesto: "What do the victims matter, if the gesture be beautiful?"⁷ It seems to us that André Thirion, author of *Grand ordinaire* and *Révolutionnaires sans révolution*, provides in these two books possibly the best answers to this embarrassing question (which is perhaps the best definition of what terrorism really is), a ques-
 85 tion that indeed challenged the relationship between surrealism and politics.⁸

Surrealism is usually seen as a reaction to the slaughter of the First World War and the bourgeois self-righteousness of the early twentieth century, but it is much less well known that the official rift between the Communist Party and the Surrealist group was actually the result of the publication of “Rêverie”, a very strange text by Dalí which cannot be described in detail here.⁹ The Communist Party objected strongly to the text, arguing that it “complicated outrageously the remarkably simple and healthy relationships between men and women”.¹⁰

In Edward James’s novels *The Gardener Who Saw God* (1937)¹¹ and the book we are going to deal with, *Richman, Poorman, Beggarman, Wop* (1937–1940),¹² irony, parody and sarcasm are overwhelmingly present and the Firbankian dimension is quite obvious, as noted by an otherwise not entirely enthusiastic critic in the *Times Literary Supplement* in the 1970s:

It must be admitted that as a poet James has only amateur status. His novel *The Gardener Who Saw God*, a Firbankian satirical allegory, is far more considerable; it has real charm and a quite strong feeling for mystical experience.¹³

But what makes James’s writing quite idiosyncratic is his grotesque treatment of what we consider as reality. Nothing is true, everything is permitted, and the real – historical reality – is perceived in its hyperreality, often verging on the “superreal” (possibly the best translation for *surréalisme*). *Richman, Poorman, Beggarman, Wop* is in fact a strange bibliophile oddity made up of innovative typographical experiments, including reproductions of historical documents, some of them forged and some originals that are so unexpected that they might pass as fakes. The main story, which runs to more than one and a half volumes, is entitled “The Propagandissimo Dog”, which becomes “The Adventures of Propaganda, an Italian Dog” and finally in the second volume, “The Adventures of Propaganda, an International Dog”. Master of the unfinished and a serial writer in the making, James is very careful to situate this story, in his earliest presentation of the narrative, within the eighteenth-century tradition of tale-telling:

You, who while you were at the University, have read the dire adventures of *Candide*, you shall know that it is a canine *Candide* whose sorrows and excitements await you in these pages. Our comfortable parents, in their Edwardian security, would not believe that any dog’s life could be such a dog’s life as this. But during the last decade the muzzle has become typical to the masses, little by little, as the condition of more and more human lives are becoming those of dogs’ lives. For we are back again in the days when no brutality is any more impossible – almost to the ancient state of things when injustice, like a sudden bad dream, on the fantastic scale has become once more the rule rather than the exception.¹⁴

But “The Propagandissimo Dog” is not pure timeless fiction; despite what the author often claims, it largely feeds on historical events and artefacts such as all the strangely more-real-than-real iconographic documents that you can find in this bibliophile curiosity: the poster of a rugby player in action (*R*, 2, p. 91)

bearing an uneasy resemblance to that of a soldier in combat, a snapshot of Mussolini (*R*, 2, p. 216), and an anatomical plate showing various hair types (*La difesa della razza*) (*R*, 2, p. 220). The plot follows the adventures of a dog who meets all the dictators and personalities of the Second World War in Europe, especially in Italy, Spain and England, and the story-telling is very much influenced by the paranoiac-critical method of his friend Salvador Dalí.¹⁵

By the word “Propaganda” we do not refer to the paranoiac activity of such men as Dr Goebbels. In this book it happens to be only the name of a poor mongrel dog (*R*, 1, p. 51)

[T]he story was not originally meant to be a political satire, but only a gentle fantasy based on the idiosyncrasies of the Italic character. However, politics play such an important role in Italy nowadays, that it has not been possible to tell my story of the dog without touching fairly often, though never I hope too seriously, upon the political dreams which absorb the present and future of that most richly beautiful among countries. (*R*, 1, p. 57)

Reading this semi-graphic novel reminds one of Brian Howard, whose invitation card for his twenty-fourth birthday in 1929 read like a manifesto:

J’adore [...] the sort of people who enjoy life just as much, if not more, after they have realized that they have not got immortal souls, who are proud and not distressed to feel that they are of the earth earthy, who do not regard their body as mortal coils, and who are not anticipating, after death, any rubbishy reunion, apotheosis, fulfilment, of ANY THING.¹⁶

Exacerbated dilettantism and political commitment seem to be a contradiction in terms. A lack of class consciousness does encourage paradoxes but this does not mean that there is no political discourse in such artistic gestures. It is quite surprising, for instance, to find in the Edward James archives copies of letters sent to Neville Chamberlain in 1938 (“Your cowardly cowering before Italy makes one almost ashamed to be an Englishman. How much more are you going to grovel?”¹⁷) or to Harry S. Truman (“In dismissing MacArthur I firmly believe you will go down in history as a great and courageous man”¹⁸). This brings me back to earlier, apparently more innocent, stories by Edward James, such as *So Far, So Glad*, which reads like a children’s book. In it, a certain Professor Stigler has very strange dreams, “full of verbose political speeches”, and Aminta’s waking dreams are described as “drowsing consciousness of political systems”.¹⁹ The book, which was published before 1939, even includes the description of a rather macabre game: “A booth where for twenty pfennig a throw one might hit down little celluloid Jews with small rubber swastikas” (*SF* pp. 15–16). It seems that in all his novels James draws parallels between poetic and political discourses, implying that a dream-like state is equally present in both, and that the subconscious impact can have similar effects. This would tend to support the view that terrorism and dictatorship are as much linguistic constructs as they are ideological ones.

The story of Propagandissimo starts in the Borghese Gardens in Rome with the local *dame pipi* (loo-lady), Giuseppina Malcontenta, but then through a form of *collage* technique the protagonist is taken back to the much more leisured, pre-war atmosphere of the “Grand Benedictine Excelsior” in Santa Malina (the hotel brochure in colour being pasted into the volume). Promoted to the rank of Mussolini’s pet dog, Propagandissimo is caught up in historical events and goes to Abyssinia. Feeling the fascist environment rather stifling, the poor mongrel escapes to Naples where he meets the politically incorrect Sybil of Cumae (a mythic character probably based on James’s friend Diana Mitford, once the wife of Brian Guinness and later married to Oswald Mosley), who is one of the true heroines of the story. Propagandissimo then takes part in a counterplot to assassinate Hitler but the emotional Duce, feeling pity for a dog he loves more than the she-wolf of the Capitoline Hill, saves his life and sends him with his secretary to Salamanca in Spain in March 1938. With the Civil War still raging behind him, Propagandissimo then flees to Paris before reaching 10 Downing Street in London where he falls in love with Toto, an irresistible “posh bitch” who makes him read Aldous Huxley’s book *Ends and Means*, while singing to him: “Ah woe is me I rather think/my heart is cold, my nose is pink,/my ears are furred like fox’s ears,/yet – just as a bird – I am feathered with fears” (*R*, 2, p. 246). Despite, or perhaps because of, all the eccentricities of the story-telling the reader gains a pretty good idea of the geopolitics of the 1930s. One thing that the novel conveys with remarkable effectiveness is the way political speeches dissolve and impregnate the most banal instances of everyday chitchat and individual behaviour. Listen to Madame Pipi Malcontenta speaking:

We are a great mighty imperial nation, as all tell me, and we people the earth and every year our people have more and more babies because the Duce tells them to and for the fun of it also. And soon like that we are sure to have a war and a great victory, they say. And it is not for me to disbelieve. [. . .] Our Duce wants us to expand. There is so little room for more in Italy, I think he wishes us to burst – to explode out all over the place. Our Duce is great he is like a great gun shell. He wishes us all to be like that. He does not wish us to starve. He is a good man and uses very big words. He must be just like Caesar. Here in Rome they have already builded this year a road of victory, an avenue of triumph from the Piazza of Victor Emmanuel to the Colosseum very broad and big to celebrate the great victory which we are going to have some day. (*R*, 1, pp. 67–8)

Such an extract should not lead us to think that the satire is attacking only one specific ideology: the enemy is not just fascist nationalism but is to be found everywhere through language. In 1938, the narrator considers what would have happened if Nazism had not taken the lead in mass manipulation. This subject is also a great source of worry both to the Sybil of Cumae and to Emperor Hadrian (who from time to time also discusses Karl Marx’s political vision at great length):

A second tower of Babel. Consternation of astronomical proportions! Momentary madness, a havoc of incredulity, devolving into a probably less momentary Armageddon.

One enemy of Bolshevism has killed the other; so it seems. Will world Communism now Triumph in the world? [...] Or will just the democracies lick their chops and say "I told you so! Megalomania leads to a mess. It was bound to happen sooner or later..." and everybody settle down to sort things out with an immense sigh of relief... and the League of Nations suddenly preen its feathers and consider that it has become important again... (*R*, 2, p. 219)

The kind of grotesque technique used by James involves parodying something which is already a burlesque. In March 1937, a character named D. H. Lawrence finds himself hidden in the dirty linen basket of a train carriage in which the Duce too is travelling, on his way back from Tripoli: "For, though one of the occupants was a dog, the other was a dictator. That saloon cabin contained 'il Duce' in sleepless, fretful mood" (*ibid.*). The resulting portrait is that of an outrageously emotional and pathetic Mussolini:

His mood varies between fatalistic melancholy – and intense irritation at having been obliged to shorten his pleasant stay in the Lybian land. [...] But the dog and the Duce have become quite endeared to each other already during the first hours of this homeward voyage. Ordinary Italians do not respect animals. But needless to say here is no ordinary Italian. (*R*, 1, p. 129)

The Dictator's theme is still the bitterness of his distress and his anxiety over the character of a people who do not seem worthy, after all, of the great destiny he has been planning for them. Even by the intoxicating aids of vanity and childish excitements, he still quite not schools them up to his chosen heights. Seizing, a trifle feverishly, the instrument, imperatively, imperiously, impetuously he lifts the bow and begins to play... "O Sole Mio". Then the good spirits and serenity of the amiable dog are for the first time in years broken. (*R*, 1, p. 134)

The megalomania of the historical Benito Mussolini is in fact exploited with a vengeance when another Mussolini, his exact duplicate, pops up in the story. The second Mussolini is to assassinate Hitler in Munich. Megalomania then turns into schizoid ubiquity when the gruesome scene opposes a monster to its *doppelgänger*. This is another typical technique of the surrealist novelists: you pick up something which undeniably differentiates one character or one situation from another and expand it paranoiac-critically to everything and everyone around, in this case the uniqueness of the supreme leader. A contemporary illustration of this can be found in the melancholy from which all those spitting images of Hitler, and more recently of Saddam Hussein, must have suffered after the disappearance of their originals – almost a Warholian situation:

"Yes, I am going to shoot Hitler on your behalf. So, don't glare like that – you can rest assured that, when you are dead, you will not be leaving behind you a rival who will take from your memory all attention. No one will be left to out-tower you in the conquest or tyranny – unless it be the General Franco," he added with a leer. "No, perhaps it will be Sir Oswald Mosley who will fill your place in history after you are gone." He now quoted incorrectly a couple of lines from Schiller's *Tyrannentod*. (*R*, 2, pp. 15–16)

265 When James describes the Civil War in Catalunya, horror becomes a pornographic spectacle. Bodies become images, and all images become a giant living and suffering body; a sort of synecdochic proliferation and derangement takes place; desire is not invested in fellow creatures any more but in surrealistic objects that transgress the boundaries between species:

270 Legs that had graced the pavements, in a tremulous step, torn stockings and the comparative leisure of accustomed fear, just the moment before the tremendous missile struck, were God knew where the moment after; and a girl's high-heeled shoe had been located upon the cleft horn of a shattered chimney-pot three stories up among the wreckage of an hotel, lonely as a perched bird above the skeleton fragment of remaining roof
275 [...], when she [the old woman] thrust her free hand into that small open pocket, her fingers and her palm had encountered something wet and jellied, something round and ragged and clammy. Pulling it out she saw, even within the gloom, that it was a human eye. (*R*, 2, pp. 131-2)

280 Although it has been thoroughly discussed, the surrealistic novel genre is still on occasion considered non-existent by some critics.²⁰ Dalí's *Hidden Faces* (1944), René Daumal's *Le mont analogue* (written between 1939 and 1943), Max Ernst's graphic novels,²¹ and those of Giorgio di Chirico²² are, however, a few of many examples that challenge this view. Di Chirico is definitely a major influence on
285 James, but *Ends and Means* by Aldous Huxley (1937) is even more significant. The book was regarded as a bible by the members of the Peace Pledge Union, but except in these circles and the Vedanta movement of California in which James participated in the 1940s, it seems to have been more or less forgotten today:

290 For Huxley had written a book called *Ends and Means* which described such a cooperative society. It was this idea which had originally inspired my first conception of a foundation for West Dean. Unfortunately the last World War intervened before Mr Huxley and I could reach a concrete realization of this dream.²³

295 In the preface to *For the Lonely* (1949), a book of poems strongly influenced by Huxley's pacifist ideals, Edward James added a typically disillusioned neo-romantic remark:

I purposely excluded the War from the whole work; because, however universal that disaster may be at the moment, it is after all only a topical incident in history which must pass, thank God!- whereas loneliness and grief of love are constants to humanity which
300 even an Utopia could not banish.²⁴

A final remarkable technique used by the novelist is his distribution of discourses to characters to whom they clearly do not belong. The result is a grotesque condemnation of propaganda, due to the extreme bad taste that goes
305 to form these hybrid associations. This is the case even with the happy ending, when the dog and Tito think about founding a new party, the "Clean Shirt Movement" (already suggested by the Sybil), as they consider that there are too many colours in the modern world; or when Goebbels asks Mussolini to give

him Propagandissimo in order to turn him into sausages to feed Goering first, and then the whole German nation – an idea which, if we follow James, stems from an old Christian tradition:

And, even if they eventually gaped and howled for more, the Doctor calculated that their mass hysteria would make them – at least for the moment – imagine that they had been fed; as the five thousand in more sacred times and in a more holy place had believed themselves fed by five barley loaves and two small fishes. (*R*, 2, p. 125)

Something comparable is at work with the Sybil who, despite all her charms and powers (not dissimilar to those of the probable model, Diana Mosley), is nonetheless the mouthpiece of the baleful destiny of mankind. At one point in the story, she has great difficulty in achieving invisibility:

She knew that effective necromancy was hard work, like social success; that in fact magic is no mere past-time, but has to be, in the words of Mr. Cecil Beaton, “a whole time job” to achieve any worth-while results. (*R*, 2, p. 57)

James’s story-telling seems to take the same path: reality being what it is, fiction must become utterly unrealistic, unlikely, and magical. The task of the modern artist who wants to outlive the death of modernism is to avoid any social realism, any psychology, any imitation of nature and concentrate on alternative simulated mindscapes. René Magritte, of all people, wrote to James about the book we are examining: “Et votre roman, avez-vous décidé de l’éditer? Je souhaite que vous aidiez, de cette façon, à imposer dans le monde, qui en a besoin, de nouvelles habitudes de penser.”²⁵ A year or so earlier, Magritte had said to James: “Comme vous voyez, l’inquiétude qui règne actuellement dans le monde n’a pas entamé ma volonté d’imaginer ces choses.”²⁶ At about the same time, James wrote to George Grosz, a painter active during the Weimar Republic: “Yes, the more the proletarian world stresses utilitarianism, the more will a romantic, irrational, inutile world continue to exist secretly. Such a world is not a madness. It is an eternal law.”²⁷

This short exploration of Edward James’s art of fiction through his literary treatment of the war theme ultimately brings us back to Bagehot’s definition of the grotesque as an artistic process. Paradoxically, what is at stake in James’s novels in the 1930s is something which already outdates future post-modernist conceptions of palimpsest narratives and “*plurivocality*”. In other words, Edward James belonged to the small ex-centric nebula of artists who initiated in their novels or artworks what could be termed the latent excess of the simulacrum. A subdued denial of heroic values and a mock notion of momentum, especially when tackling issues of life and death, are overwhelmingly present in James as well as in the art scene today. In Damien Hirst’s artworks, the option is generally twofold: let it rot, or keep it forever. In both cases, there is no apocalypse to wait for or to fear, hence no end to the shock-value process. In Joseph Nechvatal’s latest videos and paintings inspired by the scenes of tortures at Abu Ghraib, such as the series known as “America Jesus tOrture” and “terrOrless

phantoms”, the artist develops the concept of *noology*.²⁸ Robert Boyd’s four-channel video installation *Xanadu*²⁹ makes us yield to the feel-good rhythm of the disco beat, although we gradually realise that we are watching a stream-of-consciousness record (using rapid-fire editing of Internet news clips, television cartoons and vintage documentary films) of human catastrophes and destructive wars. And yet the Xanadu effect is still there; the groovy soundtrack keeps us alive and kicking despite and beyond all moral calls and agendas. Even in the case of Jonathan Littel’s controversial best-selling novel *Les bienveillantes*,³⁰ the reading experience can have quite opposite results if you consider what you read as non-realistic, non-allegorical fiction, rather than as a surreal compound of multifaceted and superimposed realities. The novel then makes you take in the whole paradoxical and monstrous panorama of history unwillingly while nurturing inner forms of resistance that you had never imagined you could be invested with. In military jargon, you call this shifting target zones.

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NOTES

¹ This article was first presented as a paper at the international conference “Europe and its Others”, which took place at the University of St Andrews on 6–8 July 2007 under the aegis of the School of Modern Languages and the Institute of European Cultural Identity Studies. A multi-disciplinary conference supported by the Society for Latin American Studies and the elite Mundus postgraduate programme *Crossways in European Humanities* (see <www.munduscrossways.eu>), it aimed at confronting European and non-European “interceptions past, present and future” of each other through a multitude of contemporary disciplines, artworks and diverse methodological approaches. Last accessed 17 January 2009.

² See <http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1558_surrealthings/> (last accessed 23 February 2008) and <<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/daliandfilm/default.shtm>> (last accessed 12 March 2008) respectively.

³ S. Dalí, *Les delits de Dalí*, trans. D. Girard (St Estève: Les Presses Littéraires, 2007).

⁴ On the complex issue of James’s “madness”, especially as discussed in the James–Dalí and James–Magritte correspondences, see D. Girard, “Edward James, poète hypnagogique” (doctoral thesis; Paris 4-Sorbonne, 1995), Vol. 1, pp. 221–5 and 245–52.

⁵ H. Read, “Why the English Have No Taste”, *Minotaure* 7 (1936), pp. 67–8.

⁶ On the grotesque, see W. Bagehot, “Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; Or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry”, *The National Review* 19 (November 1864), pp. 26–67: “Ornate art, as much as pure art, catches its subject in the best light it can, takes the most developed aspect of it which it can find, and throws upon it the most congruous colours it can use. But grotesque art does just the contrary. It takes the type, so to say, *in difficulties*. It gives a representation of it in its minimum development, amid the circumstances least favourable to it, just while it is struggling with obstacles, just where it is encumbered with incongruities. [...] This art works by contrast. It enables you to see, it makes you see, the perfect type by painting the opposite deviation. It shows you what ought to be, when complete it reminds you of the perfect image, by showing you the distorted and imperfect image” (p. 37).

⁷ C. Tisdall & A. Bozzola, *Futurism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977), p. 17 (both quotations).

⁸ Anon. [André Thirion], *Le grand ordinaire* (no publisher, 1934), republished as A. Thirion, *Le grand ordinaire* (Paris: Eric Losfeld, 1970), with illustrations by Oscar Dominguez; A. Thirion, *Révolutionnaires sans révolution* (Paris: Belfond – Le Pré aux Clercs, 1958).

⁹ S. Dalí, “Réverie”, *Le surréalisme au service de la révolution* 4 (December 1931), pp. 31–6. The text is reproduced in full in my anthology of Dalí’s poetry (pp. 101–11).

¹⁰ See A. Le Brun, *Qui vive: considérations actuelles sur l’actualité du surréalisme* (Paris: J. J. Pauvert – Ramsay, 1991), p. 66.

¹¹ E. James, *The Gardener Who Saw God* (London: Duckworth, 1937).

¹² The two volumes of *Richman* were published in a private edition by the James Press: Vol. 1 (1937/38), Vol. 2 (1939/40). The author’s name appears on the cover as Edward Selsey. References will be given in the text as *R* followed by volume and page number.

¹³ M. Richardson, “Rich and Strange”, *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 July 1978, p. 156.

¹⁴ E. James, “The Propagandissimo Dog”, *Richman, prière d’insérer* (publisher’s note).

¹⁵ See S. Dalí, *Conquête de l’irrationnel* (Paris: José Corti, 1935).

¹⁶ Reproduced in J. Lancaster (ed.), *Brian Howard: Portrait of a Failure* (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 332–3.

¹⁷ E. James, telegram to Neville Chamberlain, 19 February 1938, Edward James Archives, The Edward James Foundation, West Dean, near Chichester, West Sussex, England (EJA).

¹⁸ E. James, telegram to H. S. Truman, 11 April 1951, EJA.

¹⁹ Edward Selsey [Edward James, pseudonym], *So Far, So Glad* (London: Duckworth, no date [1938/39]), pp. 56–7. Further references will be given in the text as *SF* followed by page number.

²⁰ See, for example, J. Chénieux-Gendron, *Le roman surréaliste* (Lausanne: Éditions L’Âge d’homme, 1983).

²¹ For example, M. Ernst, *Une semaine de bonté: ou, les sept éléments capitaux* (Paris: Jeanne Bucher, 1934), with “roman” (novel) written on the title page. See also Ernst’s *Rêve d’une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* (Paris: Éditions du Carrefour, 1930) and *La Femme cent têtes* (Paris: Éditions du Carrefour, 1929). All three are reproduced in an outstanding new Italian reedition of Max Ernst’s complete graphic novels: *Una settimana di bontà* (Milan: Adelphi), with an afterword, “Le Sirene cantano quando la ragione si addormenta”, by Giuseppe Montesano.

²² G. di Chirico, *Deux fragments inédits* (Paris: H. Parisot, 1938).

²³ E. James, letter to Mrs Brown, 26 May 1968, EJA.

²⁴ E. James, “Preface to Part I”, *For the Lonely* (published in a private by James), pp. 180–6.

²⁵ “Have you decided to publish that novel of yours? I wish you could thus contribute to imposing new ways of thinking on the world, which are so badly needed at present.” René Magritte, letter to Edward James, 12 July 1939, EJA.

²⁶ “As you see, the worries with which the world is currently beset have not weakened my resolve to imagine these things.” René Magritte, letter to Edward James, 16 October 1939, EJA.

²⁷ G. Grosz, *A Little Yes or a Big No: The Autobiography of George Grosz*, trans. S. Dorin (New York: The Dial Press, 1946), p. 187.

²⁸ See Joseph Nechvatal’s website at <<http://www.nechvatal.net/>>. Last accessed 23 June 2006.

²⁹ Robert Boyd, *Xanadu*, exhibition held at Participant Inc. Gallery in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, 95 Rivington Street, in April and May 2006; see <<http://www.participantinc.org/>>. Last accessed 29 June 2006.

³⁰ J. Littel, *Les bienveillantes* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006); winner of the Prix Goncourt in 2006 and now translated into numerous languages.