

## The Baroque and the Marvelous Real

to try your patience, so I will begin without preamble, in a somewhat dry and perfunctory manner, with a few dictionary definitions.

Before I begin to talk about the baroque, I would like to settle a linguistic dispute: what is the baroque? Everybody talks about the baroque, everybody knows more or less what the baroque is or can feel the baroque. The same thing happens with Surrealism. Today, everybody knows what Surrealism is, everybody says after witnessing an unusual occurrence: "How surreal." But if we go back to the basic text on Surrealism, to André Breton's *First Manifesto*, written in 1924, we must face the fact that the definition given by the founder of this movement hardly corresponds to what happened later. Breton himself was incapable of defining what he was doing, although he knew very well what he was going to do. Let's turn to the dictionaries. Let's start with the *Petit Larousse*. We are told: "Baroque: neologism. Synonym of Churrigueresque. Gallic in its extravagance." But we look for *barroquismo*<sup>2</sup> and are told: "Neologism, extravagance, bad taste." In other words, the baroque betrays Gallic characteristics and is identified exclusively with the architecture of a man named Churriguera, who was not the best representative of the baroque period but rather of a kind of mannerism; this does not explain anything at all, because the baroque is something multiple, diverse, and enormous that surpasses the work of a single architect or a single baroque artist.