LA RÉPRODUCTION PERMISE: External and Internal influences on René Magritte's 'La Réproduction Interdite' and its provenance within Magritte's oeuvre

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External and internal influences on René Magritte's *La Réproduction Interdite* and its provenance within Magritte's oeuvre.

Master Thesis

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MA Arts and Culture: Museums and Collections

2021-2022

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Surrealism was a cultural movement that emerged in the aftermath of World War I. It covered a number of fields, such as poetry, music, literature and visual arts, which mainly concerned painting. Painted works were illogical, contained a deformed reality and resembled dreams. One well known surrealist painter is the Belgian René Magritte (1898-1967), who is known today for his paintings where nothing is quite what it seems. A recurring theme in his work is a concealed face, where the subject's face is often covered by an apple, a top-hat or other objects. An example of this is *La Réproduction Interdite* (not to be reproduced) (1937) (oil on linnen, 81 x 65,5 cm) (fig. 1), which is currently located at the Boijmans van Beuningen museum in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The painting shows a man, facing away from the viewer. He is standing in front of a mirror, but his face is not visible because in the reflection of the mirror, the viewer again sees the back of his head. The large, golden framed mirror reflects the wall behind it, which has the same off-white, almost beige color as the wall against which the mirror is placed. Judging by its architectural features, the man appears to be standing in front of a sand-colored marble fireplace. He has dark hair and is wearing a dark brown blazer over a white shirt. Lastly, there is a book on the fireplace, entitled *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym,* which is the French translation of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), written in 1857 by the French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867). Unlike the man, the book is indeed reflected correctly in the mirror.

The sitter for this portrait is the Englishman Edward James (1907-1984). This is known because James had hosted Magritte in his house in London from February 12 to March 19, 1937, and commissioned this portrait afterwards. James was a patron of surrealist art, having previously hosted the Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dalí in the same manner the year before. James commissioned Magritte to paint five works, three of which were reproductions of existing paintings by the artist; *Le Modèle Rouge* (the red model)*, Jeunesse Illustré* (youth illustrated) and *Au Seuil de la Liberté* (on the threshold of liberty). The two other works were portraits; *La Réproduction Interdite* and *Le Principe du Plaisir* (the pleasure principle).[1] Magritte painted the reproductions during his stay in London, and the portraits after he had returned home to Brussels. Both portraits were painted from photographs, and the photograph Magritte used for *La Réproduction Interdite* can be seen on fig. 2, and was likely taken by the artist himself. In the photograph, James is standing in front of Magritte's reproduction of *Au Seuil de la Liberté*. This large painting shows a room with a cannon pointing to the wall. All three visible walls are covered with paintings, and are visible eight in total. On the photograph James' back is visible, the paintings of a cloudy sky and a house can be seen, as well as the cannon. James is positioned in such a way that the cannon is

[1] H. Gaßner, "Elective Affinities—René Magritte as the Guest of His Patron Edward James in London: The Artist's Letters and Postcards to His Wife, 12 February–19 March 1937", *The University of Chicago PressGetty Research Journal*, 12, 1 (2020): 79-80.

pointing at his head, so, in addition to functioning as a visual aid for Magritte while painting this portrait, this photograph might have been a joke between the two men as well.

Magritte's life was well documented, which results in a lot of available information when researching the artist. In addition to his own writings, the publications of his personal friends Suzi Gablik (1970) and Harry Torczyner (1977) are important sources when studying the artist. Magritte frequently spoke and wrote about his ideas concerning art. Torczyner's publication is a collection of letters written by Magritte, addressed to numerous people, that provide an insight in Magritte's views on art, philosophy, life, and the different groups of surrealism. Gablik's book contains a detailed description of Magritte's personality, using many direct quotes, again providing clarity on Magritte's ideas about the world around him. Lastly, art historian David Sylvester, who compiled a catalogue raisonnée of Magritte's work in 1992.

Although the literature on Magritte and surrealist art in general is vast, little research has been done on *La Réproduction Interdite*. In a 2020 article, art historian Hubertus Gaßner describes Magritte's time spent in London, using correspondence between the painter and his wife. He considers *La Réproduction Interdite* as a pendant to Magritte's *La Durée Poignardée* (time transfixed) (1938) (fig. 3), because these two paintings share the same fireplace.[2] Furthermore, Gaßner describes a letter Magritte sent to his wife about the painting when he was about to leave London: "I'll catch the 10 a.m. train like last time. I'll bring a photograph of James with me and paint his portrait in Brussels."[3] This photograph is likely the one where James is standing in front of *Au Seuil de la Liberté*. Lastly, Gaßner mentions that the portrait was hung in the ballroom of James' house, along with two other paintings, and they were displayed in an unusual manner. They were hung behind one-way mirrors and could only be seen if a light behind them was turned on (this can be compared to one-way mirrors that are used in interrogation rooms of police stations). The author has written that: "James simultaneously occupies the real space in front of the mirror and, in the same view, the virtual space inside it. The subject of the portrait has crossed over the boundary from the real world to the virtual looking-glass world and yet at the same time stands firmly in painted reality."[4] This would mean that, when James was looking at the painting with the lights turned on, the portrait would become three-fold, because a person standing behind James would see his backside three times, looking into a mirror twice. The meaning of this placement is not addressed by Gaßner. Even though the article is helpful when constructing a historical overview of Magritte's time spent with James, a lot of information about the portrait is missing. For example,

[2] Ibid., 95.
[3] Ibid., 116.
[4] Ibid., 118.

the comparison with *La Durée Poignardée.* On first glance, both fireplaces appear to be the same, but when closely inspecting *La Réproduction Interdite*, a detail of relief can be seen on the viewer's left. The fireplace in *La Durée Poignardée* does not have this relief, which means that even though both paintings might be inspired by the same place, they do not match completely. Additionally, *La Durée Poignardée* was not commissioned by James, but painted by Magritte for a solo exhibition in Brussels in 1939. James did purchase the work, but the two had not discussed this.[5] Furthermore, Gaßner barely mentions the book on the fireplace, or the title of the work. There might be a connection between the title and the fact that Magritte was commissioned to reproduce his works. Even though Gaßner addresses the preparatory photograph for the portrait, he does not wonder about the change in background with the actual portrait, and why Magritte decided to place James in front of a mirror or a fireplace. A lot of questions remain.

Media and communications scholar Diana Silberman Keller (2007) wrote her dissertation about the mirror as an ambiguous object, using *La Réproduction Interdite* as a case study. She also provides an analysis of the book *Les Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym* on the mantel, in which only one passage contains a mirror. Starring in this passage is Too-wit, a native tribe leader from an island the main characters visited. These characters, Arthur Gordon Pym and Dirk Peters, had reached the island after sailing for some time. Even though the natives appeared friendly at first, they unexpectedly ambushed the ship's crew right before they were planning on leaving. Pym and Peters survived, taking Too-Wit as a hostage before sailing off. On board of the ship, Too-Wit stumbles upon a mirror, an object he had never seen before. Poe writes about Too-wit turning around and facing the mirror with his backside, like James in the painting. Then, Too-wit falls to the ground, crying and covering his face.[6] This form of hiding one's face can also be a connection between the book and the painting, because James' face is invisible. According to Keller, the mirror has many meanings and functions. The mirror's reflection can produce more visibility, but also questions the relationships between word and text.[7] Because the novel is accurately reflected as opposed to James, this reflection can be interpreted in multiple ways. The cover of the book reads Poe's name before Baudelaire's, yet, in the reflection, Baudelaire's name precedes Poe's.[8] This accurate reflection can be seen as a reproduction, and so can a translation. These interpretations raise questions about the work's title. Adding to these questions is the fact that Poe was fond of the theme of doubles, with the mirror as a medium. Keller goes a step further by suggesting that

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[5] Ibid.
[6] C. Baudelaire, *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym* (Paris: Michel-Lévy Frères, 1868), 149-150.
[7] D. Keller, "Mirrors Triptych Technology: Remediation and Translation Figures", Dissertation (The European Graduate School, 2007).
[8] Ibid., 102.

Baudelaire's translations made him a double of Poe, which Magritte illustrated by using a mirror as a medium in his portrait.[9] The title of the work states that reproduction is forbidden, however Magritte is here reproducing a reproduction. When reading this dissertation, it becomes clear that the mirror is a very influential object. It contributes to many possible interpretations of the work, and thus raises even more questions.

Other articles in which *La Réproduction Interdite* is mentioned only describe the work and its vagueness (for example, the inaccurate reflection of the subject), which demonstrates the lack of research and knowledge about this portrait.[10] A lot of unclarity remains on the painter's decision to place James in front of a mirror and a fireplace. Furthermore, the book on the fireplace is often neglected. Even though Keller has mentioned it in her dissertation, she does not research its significance or relationship with Magritte, or who had chosen this book to be in the painting; James or Magritte.

These two men were not the only people who could have influenced this *La Réproduction Interdite*. By the time the portrait was painted, Magritte had been involved with several surrealist groups; in Brussels, Paris and briefly in London. The Paris group can be viewed as the center, because it was led by the founder of the surrealist movement, André Breton (1896-1966), who had written two surrealist manifestos in which the principles of the movement were formulated. Even though some surrealists were a part of multiple groups, they held different ideas about the movement. For example, according to art historian Anneke Wijnbeek (1996), the French group wanted to reach a higher sense of reality by painting or writing without thinking, while the Belgian group intentionally altered the representation of reality.[11] Magritte was involved with all of these groups, and was thus subject to many influences. In 1929, eight years before painting *La Réproduction Interdite,* Magritte distanced himself from Breton. From this year on, he would mostly be involved with the Belgian surrealists. However, in 1940, the members of this group would distance themselves from Magritte. He would continue to paint according to his distinctive style and is categorized as a surrealist painter today, even though he was not an official member of any surrealist group for the greater part of his life.

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[9] Ibid., 103.
[10] Some examples include D. Nasta, "La reproduction interdite: enjeux narratifs du transfert identitaire chez Magritte et Antonioni", *Recherches en Communication,* 8 (1997): 70; K. Herding, "Hamburg and Rome. René Magritte and Surrealism", *The Burlington Magazine*, 124, 952, (1982): 470-71; É. Clémens, "De Magritte à Nougé ou du réel", *Textyles*, 17-18 (2000): 75.
[11] A. Wijnbeek, "René Magritte", in *The Dictionary of Art, Volume 20,* ed. Jane Turner (New York, NY: Grove, 1996), 100.

These relationships raise questions about the portrait within Magritte's oeuvre and influences while he painted it. The artist was no longer involved with Breton and would soon be rejected by the Belgian surrealists, and therefore this portrait could be placed within a period of transition. Because scholars have neglected this portrait and because Magritte had many social and professional relationships at the time, it is interesting to research the influences on *La Réproduction Interdite.* Insight into these influences may contribute to the clarification of Magritte's transitional period and the placement of the portrait within his oeuvre.

Knowledge about the painting, Magritte's involvement and uninvolvement with surrealist groups and his visit to the portrait's commissioner in London result in unclarity about the roles of the three components that were involved in this portrait, and its place in Magritte's oeuvre. Scholars have not considered the surrealists, Magritte and James and their individual input in the same context regarding this work. When researching the three components' influences, it might be helpful to consider them separately. Therefore, in this paper *La Réproduction Interdite* will be studied from the perspective of Magritte's relationships with the surrealist groups (and André Breton in particular), Magritte' personal experiences and ideas and Edward James, in order to find answers to questions concerning the painting and to the extent of influence that these three people had on its creation; it aims to expose the influences of individual components in the construction of this painting, as well as the importance of these influences regarding Magritte's period of transition.

Chapter 1: Surrealism's legacy

Magritte is known today as a surrealist painter, and he had personal as well as professional relationships with the members of this dominant cultural movement. Because this movement characterizes and impacted his work, it is important to understand Magritte's position within the movement when researching him on an individual level. In the late 1920s, when he was affiliated with Breton, Magritte developed his distinctive surrealist painting style, had participated in multiple surrealist exhibitions and was in contact with the London surrealist group while staying with James. For these reasons, the impact of surrealism on *La Réproduction Interdite* will be researched first, before the artist himself, as it is important to identify the principles of surrealism when comparing them to the principles of Magritte.

Therefore, in this part of the paper, three aspects of the surrealist movement will be discussed, aiming to understand its impact on Magritte and the artist's place in it. Firstly, I will analyze the first surrealist manifesto, because it illustrates the foundations, inspirations and guidelines for the movement as well as Breton. Secondly, the second manifesto will be researched, because Magritte contributed to this publication, which aides in the placing of Magritte within the movement. Thirdly, the Belgian and English surrealist groups will be discussed. Here, the Belgian group is the most important, because it marks Magritte' first encounter with surrealism. The English group will not be discussed separately, simply because of its small scale and lack of distinctive characteristics. Even though it is worth mentioning, the French and Belgian groups were the most significant for the movement and for Magritte.

1.1: The first surrealist manifesto and its origins

The surrealist movement validated itself by manifestos. This tactic of the historical avant-garde was one of the last of its time. In the 70 years prior to the surrealist manifestos, such publications had become more common. Even though the majority of these were political, artistic manifestos were being published with increasing frequency. The surrealist manifesto was published just after the ones of futurism, cubism, De Stijl and Dada, and especially the latter was politically loaded as well. The surrealists claimed to be for the people, and encouraged people of all races and lower classes; because they wanted to break with the western conventional canon.[12] In 1924, André Breton, the founder of the surrealist movement in Paris, published his first manifesto. Surrealist art, according

[12] K. Strom, ""Avant-Garde of What?": Surrealism Reconceived as Political Culture", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 62:1 (2004): 42.

to Breton, embodied irrationality and the world of dreams, in addition to the concepts of the subconscious and pure thought, which would not be polluted by religious or political ideas and social classification. There were no clear figurative guidelines for this, so these concepts were embodied by artists in numerous different ways.[13]

Breton's leadership of the movement was not easily claimed. Two weeks before the publication of his first manifesto, the French-German poet Yvan Goll published a surrealist manifesto in Paris as well.[14] After moving from Switzerland to Paris in 1921, Goll changed his previous expressionist writing style to surrealist.[15] In October 1924 he founded the magazine *Surréalisme,* and in its first and only issue he published the first *Manifeste du Surréalisme.* Even though it was only two pages long, Goll made a statement by invoking this *new* cultural movement.[16] In his text, Goll wrote: "The most beautiful images are those which bring together elements of reality that are far apart from each other as directly and as quickly as possible.".[17] This quote foreshadows the visual properties of many famous surrealist artworks known today.[18]

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[13] For example, the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) is mostly known for being a cubist painter, but can be identified as a surrealist as well. In his painting *Guernica* (1937), Picasso refers to the bombing of the eponymous town during the Spanish civil war. Even though this work appears to be cubist because of its collages, it can also be defined as surrealist. André Breton, the founder of the surrealist movement, described the (cubist) deconstruction of objects as the redefinition of reality, or making contact with the subconscious (J. Xifra & R. Heath, "Publicizing atrocity and legitimizing outrage: Picasso's Guernica", *Public Relations Review*, 44, 1 (2018): 30.). He described Picasso as a surrealist in cubism (A. Breton, "What is Surrealism?", Lecture, Brussels, June 1, 1934.). The Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) is referred to as a surrealist as well. In her painting *The Two Fridas* (1939), Kahlo has portrayed herself as two women holding hands, with different appearances. Even though Kahlo had claimed Breton's surrealist manifesto to be "pretentious" and "boring", while being put off by his "arrogance", she is historically often placed within this movement and has had contact with its members (J. Josten, "Reconsidering Self-Portraits by Women Surrealists: A Case Study of Claude Cahun and Frida Kahlo", *Atlantis,* 30.2 (2006): 26.). The fact that Kahlo portrays two versions of herself might refer to a division within her subconscious, and again has to do with deconstruction.

[14] The original manifesto was published by Paris Editions du Sagittaire, Chez Simon Kr in 1924. The publication used in this thesis is a combination of the first and second manifestos, together with some of Breton's other publications. This version was published by Jean-Jacques Pauvert in 1962 and does not contain any alterations to the original manifestos.

[15] R. Vilain, "The Death of Expressionism: Yvan Goll (1891-1950)", *Oxford German Studies,* 42:1 (2013): 98.

[16] Neither Goll nor Breton actually introduced the term *surrealism,* hence the italicization of the word 'new'. The French author Guillaume Apollinaire had actually introduced this term, referencing his 1917 play *Les Mamelles de Tiresias.* Both Goll and Breton did credit Apollinaire in their manifestos for his concept.

[17] Y. Goll, "Manifeste du Surréalisme", *Surréalisme,* 1, 1 (1924): 2. Own translation, the original quote is as follows: "Les plus belles images sont celles qui rapprochent des éléments de la réalité éloignés les uns des autres le plus directement et le plus rapidement possible.".

[18] Think of the Spanish Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) and his *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), where he painted liquid-seeming clocks in a landscape. Clocks are not normally found in a landscape, and their liquid appearance makes this work even more surrealist when having read Goll's manifesto. Another example is the German artist Meret Oppenheim (1913-1985) and her *Déjeuner en Fourrure* (1934), in which a teacup, a

Nevertheless, today the surrealist movement is mostly associated with Breton, who advocates irrationality, recalls the bliss of childhood and its easy life without restrictions. The manifestos written by Goll and Breton do not differ that much. Both wrote about the importance of dreams and the associations people make with objects, and both use the Austrian-Hungarian doctor Sigmund Freud as an example of using dreams to reach pure thought. However, the two men and their groups did not get along and refused to acknowledge their resemblances. It is reported that Breton and Goll were at one point physically fighting each other and had to be interrupted by the police.[19] Eventually, Breton and his group claimed the title of the surrealist movement, because they outnumbered Goll and his group. The ideas of the manifesto were followed by an elite group of Paris-based surrealists, with Breton eventually in the center. Surrealists would have to be accepted by Breton, but did not necessarily have to be alive. For example, in the first manifesto Breton called Poe a surrealist in adventure, Baudelaire a surrealist in morality and Rimbaud a surrealist in the way he lived.[20] Art historian Dawn Adès (1998) phrased this as 'trans-historical surrealism', and it implies that not even membership of the movement qualified an artist as a surrealist.[21]

Breton's surrealism is mostly focused on the boundaries between the conscious and unconscious mind. When one is dreaming, anything is possible that would normally not be (flying, dying, etc.) and yet one does not question these things while dreaming them. Breton believed that the combination of the dream and reality would result in a surreal reality. He defined surrealism as "pure psychic automatism… outside of all concern for aesthetics or morals.".[22] Some examples on how to make surrealist art are provided, and Breton explained the association between words and things, and between things and things. To illustrate this, he wrote: "This summer the roses are blue; the woods are glass.".[23] Lastly, he wrote that surrealists are non-conformists.[24] Non-conformism was a movement in interwar France, where its members positioned themselves outside of the existing ideologies, wanting to find a *third way,* between capitalism and communism, which can be

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spoon and a saucer are covered in fur. These two elements, a tea-set and fur, have essentially nothing in common with each other, which is why their combination can be identified as surrealist according to Goll's manifesto.

[19] G. Durozoi, "Salvation for us is Nowhere", in *History of the Surrealist Movement,* ed. Alison Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 66.

[20] A. Breton, *Manifestes du Surréalisme* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1962), 41.

[21] D. Adès, "Edward James and Surrealism", in *A Surreal Life: Edward James, 1907-1984,* ed. N. Coleby (Brighton, EN: Royal Pavilion, Libraries & Museums, 1998), 88. Another example of this is the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, who is viewed today as a surrealist artist, even though she was not a member of the movement.

[22] Breton, *Manifestes,* 40. Own translation, the original quote is as follows: "Automatisme physique pur… en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale."

[23] Ibid., 63. Own translation, the original quote is as follows: "Cet été les roses sont bleues; le bois c'est du verre."

[24] Ibid., 15-16, 22, 26, 27 & 44-47.

compared to a third way between the conscious and unconscious reality. To summarize, Breton denounced the western past and its rules, art, social classification and ideologies, and the boundaries between art and life.

When Breton claimed the surrealist movement and dismissed Goll, his 1924 manifesto became the basis of the surrealist group in Paris. He also started publishing a magazine, called *La Révolution Surréaliste* (the surrealist revolution). The word 'revolution' is commonly used by the surrealists, because their movement concerned all aspects of society (and not just the arts). A number of people are mentioned in the manifesto as inspirations, but according to art historian Robert Short (1966) it primarily combines "Rimbaud's '*Lettre du Voyant*', Hegel's dialectical method, and Freud's analysis of the unconscious".[25] In the following paragraph, I will analyze the first manifesto in accordance to these influences in addition to examining Short's claims.

The French poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) had addressed his *Lettre du Voyant* (letter of the seer) to the French poet Paul Demeny (1844-1918) in May 1871. In this letter, Rimbaud criticizes conventional western poetry, and argues a new poetic method, which complies with the surrealists' rejection of the western canon of art. He considers the poet as a *voyant,* who is a seer of his own thoughts. Poetry, from the ancient Greek civilizations until the romantic movement, complied to rules: prose, rhyme, rhythm, etc. Rimbaud argues that the poet should not concern himself with these conventions, but should write from the depths of his soul and emotion. With his famous quote "Je est un autre" (I is another), he means to separate his literary self from his actual self, like he is viewing himself as a person standing next to him.[26] Adding to this, Rimbaud later writes that "Poetry will no longer just set action to rhythm; it will, itself, take the lead" (La poésie ne rythmera plus l'action ; elle *sera en avant*).[27] This quote closely resembles what Breton later formulated as *automatic writing,* or the application of *pure psychic automatism*, which means that an author must not concern himself with rules and restrictions when writing, but he must let his thoughts lead him.[28] Breton's fondness of Rimbaud can be identified in his other writings as well.

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[25] R. Short, "The politics of surrealism, 1920–36", *Journal of Contemporary History,* 1.2 (1966): 4. Short has written multiple books and articles on surrealism.

[26] Arthur Rimbaud to Paul Demeny, May 15, 1871; A. Strhan, "Je est un Autre': Writing and the Otherness of the Self--A Response to Atsuko Tsuji. The Self, the Other and Language", *Dialogue between Philosophy, Psychology and Comparative Education* (2009): 96; C. Chien & A. Hickey, "Je est un autre: Memory, Self, and the Autobiographic Text", Thesis, Wellesley College (2014).

[27] Arthur Rimbaud to Paul Demeny, May 15, 1871.

[28] *Automatic writing* is also comparable to what the American psychologist William James had formulated as "stream of consciousness" in 1890. This writing technique recreates the irrational and rapid stream of thoughts that cross the human mind, where plot, finished thoughts and interpunction are often missing. There is no evidence that connects Breton to James, however their methods are very similar.

In 1925, Breton published a text called *Lettre du Voyant,* and in the second manifesto he included a letter written by Rimbaud.

The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) is also named as an inspiration for Breton by Short, but his influence is more difficult to identify. Hegel's theory states that the confrontation of a thesis and an antithesis would result in a new, elevated synthesis. He had called this a dialectical system, which was later adopted and developed by Karl Marx. When comparing this method to surrealism, it is difficult to determine which aspect of the movement corresponds exactly with Hegel's method. Short argued that Breton adapted the dialectal method to fit within surrealism because he wanted to be a member of the Marxist movement.[29] The fact that Breton wanted to do this resulted from the surrealist break with western convention, and their appeal to minorities (either in ethnical sense or in social sense, because he denounced social classification). Breton's statement of being a non-conformist is the only evidence for his alleged inspiration of Hegel. Nevertheless, some aspects of dialectics could be identified, like the syntheses between the world of dreams and that of reality, between capitalism and communism (which relates to the surrealists' non-conformism and Marxism), or the wish for a revolution. However, this is not literally stated in the manifesto. Furthermore, Hegel's name is not mentioned anywhere, while Rimbaud's and Freud's are indeed.

Lastly, Short mentions Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) as an influence on Breton and the manifesto. Freud's psychoanalytical theories and methods had resulted in the 1899 publication *Die Traumdeutung*, in which he related dreams to the subconscious. The words 'dreams' and 'subconscious' have become familiar when studying Breton. Breton himself went to medical school, before pursuing a career as a writer and poet, and during the Great War he worked on a neurological ward. In the manifesto, he mentions using some of Freud's methods on his patients and continues to describe the concept of *spoken thought.* This, he explains, is a monologue where one speaks as fast as possible, without being obstructed by thoughts.[30] Spoken thought can be compared to Breton's idea of pure thought, where one is not interrupted by anything, externally and internally, which again closely resembles *automatic writing*.

To conclude, Short is partially right in crediting Breton's main influences for his first manifesto to Rimbaud, Hegel and Freud. The theories and methods of Rimbaud and Freud are very similar to Breton's *automatic writing*, and Breton mentions both names multiple times. In the first manifesto, Hegel's name is not mentioned, but his dialectical method can be recognized in several aspects of surrealism. The most obvious aspects are the syntheses between art and dreams or life

[29] Short, "The politics", 20.
[30] Breton, *Manifestes,* 36-37.

and dreams, and the non-conformist wish to find a synthesis between communism and capitalism (the third way).

Two other influences that Short failed to mention are fundamental in the first manifesto. Firstly, Short has overlooked Charles Baudelaire, whom Breton called a "surrealist in morality" in the manifesto.[31] The poet had spoken about his aversion to capitalism and the bourgeoisie, something Breton based his philosophy on.[32] Breton's admiration of Rimbaud may have caused him to read the work of Baudelaire, since the two poets were friends. Rimbaud had called Baudelaire "the first *voyant*" in his *Lettre du Voyant,* demonstrating his respect for Baudelaire as a poet.[33] According to linguist William Goldhurst (1979), Rimbaud had even influenced Edgar Allan Poe, the author of *Pym,* who often wrote about themes of seeing and perception, which can in turn be related to *Lettre du Voyant.*[34] These influences illustrate the complex networks of poets, and also provide evidence of their impact on several surrealists.

Another important name which has been overlooked by Short is the author Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), the man who actually introduced the term *surrealism.* In the manifesto, Breton wrote that he had largely taken over Apollinaire's definition of the term. According to French-literature historian Willard Bohn (1977), Apollinaire never actually defined it, but rather described the term with concepts. Bohn states two fundamental elements of Apollinaire's surrealism: surprise and analogical parallels to reality.[35] When comparing this to Breton's idea of *automatic writing*, the element of surprise is certainly present. Analogical parallels to reality can mean multiple things, like the reflection of somebody's personal reality in automatic writing, the abolished boundaries between art and life, or the justification of dreams. Clearly, Baudelaire and Apollinaire were of great influence to Breton and cannot be dismissed when analyzing his first manifesto.

1.2: The second surrealist manifesto and Magritte's contributions in Paris

The second manifesto by Breton was published in the last issue of his magazine, *La Révolution Surréaliste,* on December 15, 1929.[36] This publication contained many other texts, as well as

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[31] Ibid., 41.
[32] M. Eigeldinger, "André Breton lecteur de Baudelaire", *Europe,* 70, 760 (1992): 113.
[33] Arthur Rimbaud to Paul Demeny, May 15, 1871.
[34] W. Goldhurst, "Literary Images Adapted by the Artist: the Case of Edgar Allan Poe and René Magritte", *The Comparatist,* 3 (1979): 4.
[35] W. Bohn, "From Surrealism to Surrealism: Apollinaire and Breton", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 36, 2 (1977): 201.
[36] This magazine had 12 issues over 5 years, with the last one appearing on December 15, 1929.

images. The first page of the manifesto features, right above the text, seven kisses (fig. 5), as if the page was kissed by people wearing lipstick. It is not clear to whom these lips belong, and neither is the reason for this. One explanation could be that the seven people who kissed this page wished to show their support for the manifesto, but the kisses could also belong to just one person. When the magazine was published in book form three months later, it contained 21 signatures of the loyal surrealists. Although the magazine contains a work by Magritte, his signature is not in this book, probably because of Magritte breaking ties with Breton on December 14, which will be elaborated on later. The second manifesto is an elaboration on the first one, reaffirming the surrealist ideas; Breton mentions his sympathy for Marxism and his ideas about dreams and automatic writing.[37] However, his tone has changed. At the end of the manifesto, he writes that he is disappointed by artists who do not engage in automatic writing and the description of dreams.[38] This disappointment would better be described as anger, intolerance or even vindictiveness, because Breton devotes parts of his manifesto to insulting and embarrassing former members of the group.[39] People that were not 'true surrealists' were exposed and excommunicated. Breton was known for doing this, and continued to do this through the years (excommunicating Salvador Dalí ten years later[40]).

In this last publication of *La Révolution Surréaliste,* Magritte's involvement with the Paris surrealist group is quite evident. The artist contributed to three sections of the magazine, including an *enquête*, where several people answer questions about love; an article, called *Les Mots et Les Images* (words and images)*,* the contents of which will be discussed later; and a work called *Je ne vois pas la (Femme) chachée dans la Forêt* (I do not see the (woman) hidden in the forest) (fig. 6). In the center of this work, the text can be seen, excluding the word *femme* (woman). There is, however, a picture of a nude woman who is standing in a *contrapposto* position and tilting her head to the left (right for the viewer), with only half of her face visible. Her left arm is stretched next to her, and her right arm is lifted, covering her left breast (comparable to Venus' arm in *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli (1486)). Surrounding the picture are sixteen *en face* portrait photographs of the men connected to the surrealist group, with their eyes closed, captured by an unknown photographer. The men are (from left to right) Maxime Alexandre, Louis Aragon, André Breton,

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[37] A. Breton, "Second Manifeste du Surréalisme", *La Révolution Surréaliste,* 12 (December 15, 1929): 8 & 15-17.
[38] Ibid., 3.
[39] Ibid., 4 & 11.
[40] This excommunication had, however, multiple reasons. Apart from the fact that Dalí did not partake in psychic automatism anymore, he had also become famous, which went against Breton's (and Mesens') ideas of anonymous unity. Lastly, he had become a fascist, which was unacceptable to the non-conformist surrealists. K. Kalczuk & C. Cañete Quesada, "Fascist Surrealism: Artistic Dynamics of Nationalist Artists in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)", *Florida Atlantic University Undergraduate Research Journal*, 10 (2021): 39.

Luis Buñuel, Jean Caupenne, Salvador Dalí, Paul Éluard, Max Ernst, Marcel Fourrier, Camille Goemans, René Magritte, Paul Nougé, Georges Sadoul, Yves Tanguy, André Thirion and Albert Valentin. According to art historian Robert James Belton (1987), the men's eyes are closed because they saw women as objects, being blinded to women's inner subjective realities.[41]

This work does not appear to be made according to *pure psychic automatism,* because the woman is pictured with accurate proportions, suggesting the application of rules and rationality instead of the free imagination. However, some surrealist ideas are visible, like the relationship between objects and words, as Breton formulated in his first manifesto. Even though the word *femme* is not written down, one reads this work with this word included. The sentence does not make sense without the word *femme,* and because there is a picture of a woman, one makes this association, almost like a rebus. This is a very simple and understandable example of the relationship between words and things, but it does reflect surrealist ideas. Magritte proved himself worthy of being a part of the surrealist group by demonstrating his knowledge and skill concerning these ideas.

Nevertheless, in 1929, Magritte decided he did not want to be affiliated with Breton anymore. Both Gablik and Sylvester have stated that the reason for this was an argument between the two men. On December 14, a surrealist gathering took place, which Magritte attended together with his wife Georgette. Georgette, a catholic, was wearing a necklace with a cross, to which Breton, an anti-Catholic, took offense. Breton started an argument, and after René became involved the couple left, marking Magritte's break with the Paris surrealist group.[42] Even though this argument might have been the direct cause of Magritte's departure, other factors may have contributed. Magritte had never agreed with Breton's ideas about Freud's methods, did not paint according to *pure psychic automatism* and valued his individualism. A recurring theme in Breton's surrealism is that of the collective. The idea of the group, his affiliations with communism, and dismissing those who did not agree with him illustrate his need for unity. However, Magritte had his personal style, ideas and wish to be a famous artist (I am referring to the fact that he made several reproductions of his works for James), which clashed with Breton's Marxist ideas of a revolution.

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[41] R. Belton, *The Beribboned Bomb* (Calgary, Canada, University of Calgary Press, 1995), 118.
[42] D. Sylvester, *René Magritte: catalogue raisonnée Vol. I* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), 111 & 112. Magritte did not break contact with Breton or the surrealists forever, he had only left Paris and the group on an official note. He would continue to correspond with many surrealists, including Breton (Sylvester, *Magritte Vol. II,* 15 (Magritte and Breton exchanged letters in June of 1934); Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 125 (Magritte and Breton exchanged letters in May of 1937).); Gablik, *Magritte,* 65.

1.3: Magritte and Mesens in Belgium and England

As mentioned, there were three surrealist groups and Magritte has been involved with all of them. Before meeting Breton, Magritte knew several surrealists in Brussels, including Paul Nougé, Marcel Lecomte and Camille Goemans, who established the Belgian group in the 1920s. The three men had published a magazine called *Correspondence* in 1924*,* with 22 one-page texts over the course of seven months. Some time after the first *Correspondence* was published, Magritte, together with his friend Édouard Léon Théodore Mesens (1903-1971), joined the three men. The magazine mostly contained criticism and recontextualization of contemporary literature, and criticism of Breton's *automatic writing*. In the *Red 16* edition of *Correspondence,* Paul Nougé addresses André Breton directly and dismisses his ideas. According to Nougé (as well as most other Belgian surrealists), writing is the product of rational decisions, and not of subconscious scribbles.[43] The critical stance towards *pure psychic automatism* is mainly what separates the Brussels group from the Paris group. The fact that the Belgian group criticized Breton's ideas did not mean that they were in a feud or that the groups were completely separated. In fact, most of the Belgian surrealists lived in Paris and were a part of Breton's group at one point. When looking at the photographs of *Je ne vois pas la Femme cachée dans la Forêt,* many Belgian artists can be identified.

Considering the ideas of the early Belgian surrealists, it seems logical that Magritte disagreed with Breton on the importance of Freud and *pure psychic automatism* when producing art. However, many Belgian surrealists continued to work with Breton even though they did not agree on some issues. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the surrealists overlooked their differences because they were part of a bigger idea; the surrealist revolution that would dismiss all classification and the western historical canon. Art historian An Paenhuysen (2005) argues that both surrealist groups valued anonymity, but that the Belgian group in particular was very strict about this. Formulated by Nougé, the surrealist artist should be an anonymous contributor to the revolution. Mesens initially disagreed with this statement, fearing that the anonymous artist would end up in passive inactivity.[44] However, these roles shifted as time passed, and Mesens pursued his ideas about anonymity so extremely that it would even affect his personal life. For example, when Mesens moved to Paris and befriended Paul Éluard, the two allegedly became so close that their

[43] J. Baetens & M. Kasper,**"** The Birth of Belgian Surrealism: Excerpts from Correspondance (1924-25)", *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America,* 128 (2013): 453 & 464-465.
[44] A. Paenhuysen, "Strategies of Fame: the Anonymous Career of a Belgian Surrealist", *Image and Narrative,* 12 (2005). Accessed on March 14, 2022. http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/tulseluper/paenhuysen.htm

relationship assumed the form of a love affair around 1934.[45] Yet, four years later, Mesens and Breton expelled him from the surrealist group because of his desire for success, illustrating the importance of surrealist ideals to its members. Mesens took over the leading role of the Belgian surrealists from Nougé, radicalizing his ideas about anonymity.

So, Breton's idea of unity was echoed by Mesens, who despised commercialism and famous artists. Even though Magritte was part of the Belgian group for a decade after parting with Breton, his individuality would eventually be problematic for them as well. In 1940, Nougé and Mesens broke off contact with Magritte.[46] Mesens claimed to be responsible for Magritte's success, including him in many exhibitions and buying his works, while Magritte thought that this was exaggerated and that this had helped Mesens' own career as well. Magritte allegedly spread the rumor that Mesens had kept most of the money that the painter had received for James' commissions.[47] Mesens began to ridicule and despise Magritte's art for being commercial; the fact that he was painting reproductions of his most successful works was not according to the surrealist ideals of anonymity. In 1967, Mesens declared himself a "proud surrealist", while Magritte had (ten years before Mesens) denounced the term.[48] Magritte thought that the term surrealism was inseparably connected with Breton and his ideas.[49] However, when Mesens wrote to Breton to state his breach with Magritte, Breton answered: "Je ne veux pas que la voie du surréalisme soit encombrée de cadavres" (I do not want the path of surrealism to be littered with dead bodies).[50] This statement is quite ironic, considering that Breton was no stranger to expelling members from his group.

In 1937, when *La Réproduction Interdite* was painted, Magritte still had a good relationship with Mesens, even though tension was brewing. Magritte had already had an argument with Breton eight years prior, and was on the verge of being dismissed by his Belgian friends, illustrating his period of transition. However, his patron in London was infatuated by anything surrealist, so the artist would have to keep up appearances.[51] Two days after arriving in London, James introduced Magritte to the English surrealist group, which had been established right after the London

[45] Ibid., Paenhuysen is referring to a letter from Paul Éluard to E.L.T. Mesens on September 14, 1934.
[46] Ibid., Paenhuysen is referring to a letter from E.L.T. Mesens to André Breton on April 18, 1940.
[47] Ibid., Paenhuysen is referring to a letter from E.L.T. Mesens to René Magritte on November 27, 1938.
[48] Ibid.
[49] H. Torczyner, *René Magritte: Tekens en Beelden* (Bentveld-Aerdenhout, NL: Landshoff, 1977), 69.
[50] Paenhuysen, "Strategies of Fame". Paenhuysen is referring to a letter from André Breton to E.L.T. Mesens on April 30, 1940.
[51] Even though Magritte had been rejected by many of his old friends, it was not Magritte against the world. He still had relationships with many (ex-) surrealists, including Éluard and Dalí.

International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries in 1936. James was not a member of the group, and not all members were English (for example, Mesens and Breton were also members). Magritte was not too enthusiastic about this meeting, and he wrote to his wife: "Yesterday evening we went along to meet the 'English Surrealist Group, 'but I wasn't exactly dazzled by the light it radiated. The group includes some likable people, some of no interest, and one or two somewhat unpleasant and stupid ones."[52]

The English surrealist group did not make a historical impact. According to correspondence between its leaders after World War II, Mesens and Jacques Brunius, the group did not operate to their satisfaction; it consisted of unworthy members and there were a lot of issues between the two leaders.[53] Adès (1980) argues that after the 1936 Surrealist Exhibition, surrealist activity in England was "patchy". Before 1940, members of the group were replaced rapidly, and few were actually devoted. According to her, surrealism in England was expressed in a more general modernism.[54] This is confirmed by art historian Anne Massey (1987), who writes that it was Mesens who stayed involved with this group for the longest time. Another one of its founders, Herbert Read, was more interested in the avant-garde in general. The reason for this is that the English modernists did not feel the urge to devote themselves to a certain aspect of the avant-garde and be opposed to another, something that was quite common for the French and Belgian surrealists.[55] Literary historian and contemporary of the English surrealists J. H. Matthews (1964) also confirms this by analyzing Read in particular. Apparently, surrealism had been present in England for about ten years before the 1936 exhibition.[56] Read had concluded that the most important reason for surrealism's failure was English individualism. This is why capitalism was so successful in England, and English artists were convinced that individualism (translated into loneliness) was the key to creating art. The international character of surrealism clashed with this idea embedded in English culture as well.[57] Furthermore the French surrealists wanted to abolish tradition, of which the English thought it

[52] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 86.
[53] D. Jean, "Was There an English Surrealist Group in the Forties? Two Unpublished Letters", *Twentieth Century Literature,* 21, 1 (1975): 82-83.
[54] D. Adès, "Notes on Two Women Surrealist Painters: Eileen Agar and Ithell Colquhoun", *Oxford Art Journal,* 3, 1 (1980): 36.
[55] A. Massey, "The Independent Group: Towards a Redefinition", *The Burlington Magazine,* 129, 1009 (1987): 232.
[56] This, according to Matthews, is evident from the fact that Breton had noticed the existence of the surrealist spirit in the literature of the past. He had drawn a parallel between the trends in England, and those in France that had led to the development of surrealism. However, the English never really responded to it (J. H. Matthews, "Surrealism and England", *Comparative Literature Studies,* 1, 1 (1964): 57.). A note on this publication: Matthews has interviewed Mesens, Read, Brunius and other surrealists for his article.
[57] Ibid., 58 & 67.

would make them look like fools, because the English had always valued tradition.[58] To conclude, even though there was a surrealist group in England, they were not nearly as successful as those in France and Belgium, and Magritte was not an official member.

Concluding remarks

René Magritte had been involved with three surrealist groups by the time he painted *La Réproduction Interdite.* The French group was undoubtedly the most influential for surrealism in general, because Breton had written the two manifestos and had been involved in all three of the groups. So, even if Magritte did not agree with him on some ideas, it is likely that Breton and the French group influenced this work. The surrealists' occupation with Baudelaire is something that can be directly traced to the portrait of James, illustrating their influence on Magritte. The Belgian group was similar to the French group, but they did not believe in *pure psychic automatism,* and, like Magritte, thought that art should be based on rational decisions. The artist's ideas about art might have originated with the Belgian surrealists, because they shared this view. The English surrealists did not really have their own identity. They consisted of French and Belgian surrealists, and of Englishmen who supported all avant-garde art. Magritte was not really enthusiastic about these people when he had first met them. These factors result in the idea that an influence of this group on James' portrait is unlikely.

Surrealism is a fluid term. It does not refer to a particular style of painting, or of thinking. Breton had clear ideas of what surrealism should be, namely *pure psychic automatism* and a philosophy derived from Freud. However, in accordance with Adès' 'trans-historical surrealism', surrealists did not necessarily have to fit all of the requirements (especially when the first manifesto was published). Later, as Breton denounced the inspirations that were once vital to the movement, the definition of a surrealist artist did not become more clear. For example, Magritte, who had distanced himself from Breton and would be expelled by Mesens three years after returning from London, is still viewed as a surrealist artist today. When focusing on the surrealist groups, the term had a different definition for every member. For the English, surrealism meant a branch of avant-garde; for the Belgians, an aversion to *pure psychic automatism*; for some artists, individual expression and for others, it meant being part of a collective whole. Mesens had said that surrealism was not an art style, but an attitude to life.[59]

[58] According to Matthews, embedded in English culture is the need to remain gentlemen (ibid., 70-71).
[59] Paenhuysen, "Strategies of Fame".

Magritte's connecting and disconnecting with Breton and Mesens illustrate that *La Réproduction Interdite* was painted during a turbulent time in the artist's life. He already denounced the Paris group and their ideas, and was on the verge of being rejected by his Belgian friends. Today, his problems with the surrealists are almost invisible: according to museums, Magritte was a surrealist painter. Considering his place within the movement and the different groups, the next part of this paper will contain a deeper examination of Magritte's personal inspirations and possible resemblances to the surrealists, to determine the significance of *La Réproduction Interdite* within his oeuvre.

Chapter 2: René Magritte's personal life, inspirations and developments

René Magritte had practiced various styles of painting before completing *La Réproduction Interdite*. When he first started producing art, he made drawings and around 1915, Magritte made his first paintings in an impressionist style. As a contemporary of Claude Monet, Edgar Degas and Auguste Renoir, he was likely influenced by the works he saw around him. However, as his work developed, he quickly moved on to different styles of painting. After studying at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Magritte adopted a painting style inspired by futurism and cubism where he produced some figurative and some non-figurative works, and mostly portraits. In 1922, Marcel Lecomte (who co-founded the Belgian surrealist group) showed Magritte *Le Chant d'Amour* (the song of love) (1914) by Giorgio de Chirico, and Magritte was so intrigued by the painting that he was allegedly moved to tears.[60] From this moment on, he started to paint exclusively figuratively, slowly adopting de Chirico's style. His works after 1922 became naturalistic, using coulisses in his compositions (fig. 4), which strongly resemble those of de Chirico. Magritte developed this style into his own between 1926 and 1947. Although his compositions and use of color vary, most of his paintings contain objects that seem like they do not belong or are placed out of context. During this time, Magritte was participating in many exhibitions, in Europe as well as in the United States, gaining some recognition.

In 1947 and 1948, in the aftermath of the Second World War, Magritte's painting style changed once again, because he returned to painting in a more impressionist style. During this time, he was also reproducing his own, older works.[61] Magritte's impressionistic style only lasted for a short while, because it was not well-received by the public. The artist claimed that this style was a mockery of the real impressionism, painting the bright side of life after the horrors of the war.[62] Nevertheless, Magritte returned to his surrealist style of painting after 1948 until his death in 1967. This is when he gained more popularity. While the abstract expressionists developed the ideas of Breton's surrealism (translating *pure psychic automatism* into non-figurative expression), Magritte inspired artists of the new pop-art movement. His depictions of everyday objects that are placed out of context and his reproductions which questioned the idea of 'original art' influenced pop artists to

[60] R. Rothman, "A Mysterious Modernism: René Magritte and Abstraction", *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift,* 76:4 (2007): 224.
[61] P. Allmer, "*La Réproduction Interdite:* René Magritte and Forgery", *Papers of Surrealism,* 5 (2007): 1 & 6.
[62] C. Wulf, "Time Transfixed", *Coronado Publishers, Produced by the Department of Museum Education The Art Institute of Chicago* (2001): 3.

do the same, aiming to criticize the age of consumerism. So, while Magritte needed the surrealists to discover his own style, he found real success after disassociating from them.

La Réproduction Interdite can be placed in Magritte's pre-war surrealistic period. At this time, Magritte had lived in Brussels and in Paris, and after his argument with Breton he was developing his own theories on the production of art. He was working with the Belgian surrealists, published articles in several magazines and participated in several exhibitions, while still being relatively unsuccessful as an artist.[63] Magritte's challenging financial situation was undoubtedly connected with the financial crisis at that time, because The Great Depression had caused the Galerie de Centaure, where he was under contract until 1929, to close. When he painted *La Réproduction Interdite,* Magritte had met dozens of surrealist artists, each with their own style and ideas. In this chapter, Magritte's stylistic and personal developments and interests, as well as his professional and social relationships will be investigated, aiming to identify influences on the portrait and its place within Magritte's oeuvre.

2.1: The lifeline

Like his painting style, Magritte's life knew many ups and downs. When he was 13 years old, his depressed mother committed suicide by drowning herself in a river. Even though Magritte never spoke about this to his wife, he did speak to a friend of his, who, according to Torczyner, has slightly exaggerated the story.[64] However, the friend's account of the story does provide some form of insight into this event. Magritte's mother was locked in her room with her youngest son (she was known to be depressed and suicidal), but left the house on the night of 12 March 1912. When her body was found two weeks later and retrieved from the water, her white nightgown was covering her face. Gablik wrote that "It was never known whether she had covered her eyes with it so as not to see the death she had chosen, or whether she had been veiled in that way by the swirling current."[65] It is not clear if René was present when his mother's body was found. In *Les Reveries du Premeneur Solitaire* (the musings of a solitary walker) (1926), *Les Amants* (the lovers) (1928),

[63] Magritte had wanted to leave Paris presumably after arguing with Breton and distancing himself from the Paris surrealists, but moved back to Brussels five months later because he had no money. Mesens (one of the Belgian surrealists) had bought 11 of his paintings halfway through 1930, which provided Magritte with the money to return to Brussels (C. Caputo, "E.L.T. Mesens: Art Collector and Dealer", *Getty Research Journal,* 12 (2020): 132).
[64] M. Viederman, "René Magritte: Coping with Loss — Reality and Illusion", *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 35.4 (1987): 975. The friend being referred to is Louis Scutenaire, a Belgian surrealist poet.
[65] S. Gablik, *René Magritte* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1970), 22.

L'Invention de la Vie (the invention of life) (1928) and *Le Sens de la Nuit* (the meaning of the night) (1927), references to his mother's suicide can be identified, as they include water, night, and faces covered with cloths. Psychiatrist Milton Viederman (1987), who personally interviewed Georgette and Harry Torczyner for this article, argues that the concealing of faces in Magritte's painting is indeed related to his mother's suicide, which would verify the story of his mother being found with her nightgown covering her face. He argues that Magritte also felt some sort of guilt for the suicide.[66] The idea of guilt can be applied to another aspect of Magritte's life, because he cheated on his wife while he was in London, with Sheila Legge, whom he had met at a surrealist gathering.[67] Guilt about his affair is unlikely to have influenced Magritte's habit of concealing faces in his painting, because he was doing this before he had met Legge. However, it does insinuate continued feelings of guilt throughout his life. Adding to this, Viederman mentions that Gablik has written that Magritte felt a kind of pride regarding his mother's suicide; he was now the son of a dead woman. The author mentions a different psychiatrist, Martha Wolfenstein, who writes that it is not uncommon for children to have similar responses to the death of a parent.[68] It is possible that this was something Magritte wanted to show to the outside world, while simultaneously hiding his feelings of guilt. Torczyner is not convinced that the story that Magritte's friend told is entirely true, while Gablik has accepted this story. Because Magritte never spoke about the death of his mother to his wife, and had only told the story to one friend, Torczyner believes that the story might have been exaggerated or part fantasy. Nevertheless, Viederman thinks that fantasy has played a big part in molding behavior and his paintings.[69] In this view, it would not have mattered if Magritte had seen his mother's dead body or not, the event would have influenced him either way. The doubt about the friend's story simply indicates that Magritte was not completely traumatized by the finding of his mother's corpse, while perhaps being told about the nightgown by his family. Having said this, Viederman is still convinced that the suicide was impactful on Magritte's painting. The concealing of faces, whether he had seen this on his mother or not, would always play a large role in his oeuvre, as is the case with *La Réproduction Interdite.*

After studying at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, René married Georgette in 1922 and started working as a commercial designer. He was a draughtsman at a wallpaper factory, and after

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[66] Ibid., 977 & 980.
[67] However, Georgette was not entirely innocent. In 1937, René had sent the surrealist poet and his friend Paul Colinet to Brussels to keep Georgette company. The two began an affair that would last until 1940. Magritte and Georgette had only lived apart for three months in that year, after reuniting for the rest of their lives.
[68] Viederman, "René Magritte", 976.
[69] Ibid.

that he designed posters and advertisements until 1926, when he was offered a contract by the Galerie de Centaure in Brussels to paint full time. This is where Magritte met Mesens, who was also working at the gallery. Magritte was given the opportunity to host a solo exhibition in 1927, and this is when he became involved with the Belgian surrealists, including Nougé, Lecomte (who had shown him the de Chirico painting) and of course Mesens. At this time, Magritte's surrealistic and more figurative characteristics were still in their infancy. Perhaps because of his underdeveloped personal style, the novelty of surrealist painting, or the artist's lack of experience; the exhibition was not well-received by critics. After his failure René and Georgette moved to Paris, where they met André Breton, became involved with the surrealist group of Paris and joined the surrealist exhibition honoring the opening of the Goemans Gallery in Paris.[70] This exhibition opened in November of 1929, a month before Magritte would part ways with this particular group. In addition to arguing with Breton, the Galerie de Centaure went bankrupt around that same time. When he returned to Brussels, he resumed his work in advertising with his brother Paul. Little is known about Magritte's life and work between the years of 1930 and 1936, presumably because he was financially unable to paint full-time.

In 1930, Mesens bought several Magritte's works for his own gallery, which opened in 1930 and closed in 1931. Even though his gallery was short-lived, Mesens continued his involvement in the art world, because he started working for the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, overseeing sales and exhibitions.[71] Additionally, he became Magritte's agent, including Magritte's works in his Palais des Beaux Arts exhibitions and thus providing him with exposure.[72] In 1933, Magritte held a solo exhibition in the Palais des Beaux Arts, followed by a solo exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York City in January 1936 and a solo exhibition at the London Gallery in 1938 (where Mesens had been co-director since that year). In the meantime, in June 1936, the New Burlington Galleries exhibition was held. Mesens was one of the organizers, leading the Belgian committee. Together with the other organizers (which included Breton), he exhibited 14 works by Magritte.[73]

At this point, Magritte came into contact with Edward James. James had befriended Salvador Dalí, who also had works exhibited in the New Burlington Galleries, around 1935 and had

[70] Goemans had moved to Paris in 1925. He was a friend of Magritte, and was also one of the founders of the Belgian surrealist group. So, even though meeting Breton had led to Magritte meeting the surrealist group in Paris, he already knew some of its members.
[71] Caputo, "E.L.T. Mesens", 133.
[72] Ibid., 136.
[73] R. Roughton, *The International Surrealist Exhibition* (London, EN: The New Burlington Galleries, 1936), 14.

let the painter stay at his house during the exhibition in London.[74] James was also involved in the exhibition, having lent the Galleries one painting by Dalí and one painting by Picasso.[75] There is some debate about their actual first encounter. Art historian Richard Calvocoressi (1984) argues that the patron and the artist became familiar through Mesens during the London exhibition.[76] According to Gaßner, it is likely that this exhibition was the place where he first became aware of Magritte, but did not actually meet him.[77] During the exhibition, after its opening days, many surrealists went to Paris, including Magritte, Dalí and James.[78] In February of 1937, Magritte traveled to London to stay with James for a few weeks, having agreed on payment for the commissions beforehand, where Magritte would paint, give a lecture and be introduced to the English surrealists.

Another distinctive feature of Magritte's works, in addition to the concealing of faces, is the combination of objects in an unfamiliar way. In his many talks and writings about his philosophy and theory of painting, Magritte explained his reason for doing this in two lectures. The first one, only lasting ten minutes, was held at the London Gallery in February of 1937. The second one, elaborating on the first one, was titled *La Ligne de Vie* (the lifeline) and held in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp in November of 1938. In these lectures, Magritte explained that he saw art as a problem, and that he had found a way of solving this.[79] His solution was to find *les affinités électives* (elective affinities) between certain objects.[80] This term, derived from chemistry, referred to chemical reactions when one ion was replaced by another. A person takes something that exists, removes one element and adds another, which was exactly what Magritte did. In his painting, this translated to combining two objects that seemed unrelated, but had a hidden relationship. His painting *Les Affinités Électives* (1933), inspired by the eponymous novel by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1809), shows a birdcage containing a large egg.[81] Magritte explained that in this case, the elective affinity is the bird; the bird is kept in a cage, and the bird lays eggs.[82] Another example of

[74] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 79-80.
[75] Roughton, *The International,* 16 & 26.
[76] R. Calvocoressi, *René Magritte* (London, EN: Phaidon, 1984), 24.
[77] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 79.
[78] Ibid., 80. Gaßner is the only author who mentions this trip to Paris (that I am aware of). It would seem rather odd that many surrealist artists would leave the site of the exhibition, since it was a large event.
[79] The nature of this 'problem' is not addressed by Magritte. However, it likely refers to the surrealists' aim to reach a higher sense of reality, or a bridge between reality and art, through the production of art, as mentioned in the introduction.
[80] Torczyner, *René Magritte,* 214 & 216.
[81] Gablik, *René Magritte*, 101.
[82] Torczyner, *René Magritte,* 216.

this is *Le Modèle Rouge* (original 1934), which is one of the reproductions Magritte painted for James. The painting shows a pair of shoes, where the toecaps have been replaced by actual toes, and the hidden connection is skin. The human skin of the foot, combined with the animal skin of the leather shoes.[83] This form of painting, combined with Magritte's lecture, demonstrates how he thought about art and about the world, and his aim to solve problems became his distinctive style of painting. From 1933 on, this was Magritte's way of painting.[84] About his work and *elective affinities*, Magritte also said that it aimed to make the viewer uncomfortable, because it was neither symbolic nor to be interpreted. The viewer has a habit of looking for meaning, even when there is none. When no meaning or explanation can be found, a feeling of terror is experienced; "[people] want something to lean on, so they can be more comfortable . . . to save themselves from the void."[85] According to Magritte, the viewer wants to abolish the mystery of the painting, while for the painter, the mystery is the point.[86] So, even though Magritte aimed to expose *elective affinities* of objects, there is no point in searching for a deeper meaning in his paintings — they are deliberately mystified.

2.2: Metaphor and poetic significance

In addition to his ideas about solving problems in art, Magritte was also occupied with certain concepts in a more philosophical way. The *elective affinities* was not Magritte's only theory about art, he was greatly occupied with the relationships between words and things too; in painting as well as reality. Philologist Charles Forceville (1988) has written an article on Magritte's use of pictorial metaphor, which means to replace one object with another. He schematically explains the sequence of this, stating that object A is replaced by object B, so the pictorial metaphor reads A = B. Using Magritte's *Le Viol* (the rape) (1934), Forceville argues that to determine A and B, A would be the frame, or what is naturally supposed to be there. In *Le Viol,* the two objects worth discussing are the woman's face and her body. Because her hair frames the face and the face is supposed to be there,

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[83] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 106. Magritte mentioned in *La Ligne de Vie* that this hidden relationship exposes a repulsive habit (ibid.).
[84] *Les Affinités Électives* was Magritte's starting point regarding this way of painting. However, he does not date the work correctly. In his lecture, he claimed that he had painted this work in 1936, when he had actually painted it in 1933, according to David Sylvester (*René Magritte Vol II*, 16). Sylvester does not provide an explanation for the changed dates, other than a speculation stating that the memory of the bird and the cage was so vivid for Magritte that he had thought that he had experienced the metamorphosis of the bird more recently.
[85] Gablik, *René Magritte,* 11.
[86] Ibid.

this would be A, and the body would be B.[87] When looking at *La Réproduction Interdite,* the two objects that would be the metaphor are James' front- and backside, in his reflection in the mirror. Because James' frontside is supposed to be seen, the metaphor reads A (frontside) = B (backside).[88] Gaßner confirms this theory by arguing that Magritte's combination of seemingly unrelated objects, or replacing one familiar object with an unfamiliar one (in a particular setting), is a classic procedure of metaphor creation.[89] Magritte uses this kind of metaphor to create tension, because this is not what the viewer knows as the truth, which thus provides discomfort.[90] This statement by Forceville can be related to Magritte's views about the interpretation of his paintings, where interpretation provides comfort. In addition to wanting to "make poetry visible", Magritte also wanted to provoke shock and terror, like he explained in *La Ligne de Vie*.[91] If this aim to shock the viewer was the reason Magritte used the pictorial metaphor, this must have worked with *La Réproduction Interdite,* because the viewer does not understand the mirror and does not know why it is not functioning properly.

According to Forceville, in addition to the pictorial metaphor, there is also the textual metaphor and a combination between the two.[92] This complies with what Keller wrote about the novel on the fireplace, which is the relationship between words and things; not just things and things. The context or relationship of objects has to do with the written word, something that Magritte was indeed familiar with.[93] In his aforementioned article, *Les Mots et les Images,* Magritte explains the relationships between words and images, like the title suggests. Containing short texts and drawings, he mentions that objects do not have to be related to their names, for example, and this also applies to Magritte's idea about titles not having to be related to paintings.[94] Here, Magritte's theory about the hidden relationships of objects can be identified in its infancy, and his thinking about objects, words and how they relate to painting is demonstrated. This illustrates the

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[87] C. Forceville, "The case for pictorial metaphor: René Magritte and other Surrealists", *Filozofski vestnik,* 9.1 (1988): 155-156.
[88] On a sidenote, philologist Randa Dubnick (1980) has written an article on Magritte's use of metaphor and metonymy. A metaphor is the replacing of something by a mental concept (for example; the world is sick), while metonymy is the replacing of something by a physical object (for example; I need a hand). So actually the pictorial metaphor of Forceville would in this case be a pictorial metonymy. However, both articles aim to illustrate the fact that figure of speech is not only presented verbally. It can also be expressed in painting; where there is no issue of language (R. Dubnick, "Visible Poetry: Metaphor and metonymy in the paintings of René Magritte", *Contemporary Literature* (1980): 407).
[89] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 101.
[90] Forceville, "The case", 151.
[91] Gablik, *René Magritte,* 149. Gablik quotes Magritte directly, but does not mention a date.
[92] Forceville, "The case", 151.
[93] The most obvious example of the combination would be Magritte's *La Trahison des Images* (1929), where he visually combined words and things.
[94] R. Magritte, "Les Mots et les Images", *La Révolution Surréaliste,* 12 (1929): 32-33.

use of pictorial metaphor, textual metaphor and the combination, and would lead to his *elective affinities* some years later.

To summarize, since around 1925 Magritte had been occupied with making poetry visible and shocking the viewer, as is demonstrated by his theories on the relationships between words and things. As his painting style developed, so did his theory. He became occupied with solving problems; problems that occurred when he wanted to achieve his goal of shocking the viewer. He had shifted from the relationships between words and things to the relationships between things and things. When he painted *La Réproduction Interdite,* he had just given his first lecture on his new theory, which means he was thinking about words and images as well as *elective affinities*. The portrait can be viewed as multiple metaphors. It could be a pictorial metaphor because the misplaced elements do not contain text, but it could also be viewed as the combination metaphor, because the book on the fireplace refers to a written text. Even though Magritte creates a metaphor, which is originally a figure of speech, there is no language barrier (partially due to the fact that there is no use of textual language, and partially due to the fact that this metaphor is not meant to be understood).

Magritte had a great interest in poetry; he wanted to make it visible. However, it is impossible to determine which works Magritte read and enjoyed, because poets have a large network of connections, all drawing inspiration from one another. For this reason, only poets that can be connected to Magritte with certainty will be researched in connection with this painting. A logical name to start with is Edgar Allan Poe. His novel is on the fireplace in *La Réproduction Interdite,* and this could have possibly been the choice of the artist. The American poet lived from 1809 until 1898, so he and Magritte never met. Magritte reportedly was a fan of his writing, reading and rereading his works for the entirety of his adult life.[95] When he visited New York City in 1965, he went to Poe's house and reportedly wept upon the sight of the cottage.[96] The book in *La Réproduction Interdite* is Poe's only completed novel, and the story is about Arthur Gordon Pym, traveling at sea with some companions. The story contains shipwreck, death, storms, ghosts and even cannibalism, and, written from a first-person point of view, was made to look like a diary. On *La Réproduction Interdite,* the reflection in the mirror only shows half of the book. Keller explains this according to the relationship between Poe and Baudelaire (or Baudelaire and Poe), but this reflection might also have something to do with the story. In the middle of the book, the crew

[95] R. Belton, "Edgar Allan Poe and the Surrealists' Image of Women", *Woman's Art Journal,* 8, 1 (1987): 12.
[96] Goldhurst, "Literary Images", 3.

reaches the equator; the halfway point, while the mirror's reflection shows half of the book, and half of James. Keller also mentions Poe's occupation with the theme of doubles; the book contains doubled images.[97] *La Réproduction Interdite* shows James as a double, and also refers to the title of the work.

An interesting connection with the book is the scene with the mirror, which I mentioned in the introduction. Too-wit experiences absolute terror when looking at it for the first time. The word terror, however, has obtained a new meaning in connection with Magritte. Magritte said that he wanted the viewer of his paintings to be shocked because the combined objects do not make sense. For Too-wit, seeing himself in the mirror did not make sense, resulting in terror and shock. Perhaps Magritte included this book in the painting to illustrate his aim, and to clarify to the viewer that there is no interpretation and terror is the right emotion to feel in that moment. This passage could thus be strongly connected with Magritte's ideas about art.

Another poet that can be connected with Magritte is Charles Baudelaire. He was the translator of the book and Magritte admired him, had certainly read some of his works and used them in his own works.[98] Baudelaire is also connected with Poe because he felt a connection with him, and he had translated many of his works quite literally, because, according to Baudelaire, Poe had written what he was thinking.[99] If Magritte felt this connection with Poe as well, it seems logical to assume that he admired Baudelaire's work for a similar reason. Keller goes a step further and suggests a sort of intertwined personality of Poe and Baudelaire, and thus a sort of intertwined personality between Poe, Baudelaire and Magritte.[100] She finds many connections with the theme of doubles, but most of these are rather speculative. However, it is known that Magritte admired the work of Poe and Baudelaire, and Baudelaire admired the work of Poe.

It is tempting to look further into the relationships Magritte had with these poets to better understand his painting. However, as Magritte had said, there should be no answers, because the fact that a painting cannot be interpreted or understood is its aim. So, it is plausible to think that Magritte presented his interest in these poets in a superficial way. The title of a painting that corresponds with one of the poet's works does not say anything about what the painting represents, as has become clear from *Les Mots et les Images*. However, even though there might not be a

[97] Keller, "Mirros Triptych", 77.
[98] One of Magritte's paintings is titled *Les Fleurs du Mal* (the flowers of evil) (1946), the same title as one of Baudelaire's most famous poetry volumes, which was published almost a century earlier.
[99] I. Fong, "Walking in the Crowd: Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin", In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Urban Literary Studies,* ed. J. Tambling (London, EN: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 1.
[100] Keller, "Mirrors Triptych", 59 & 61.

deeper meaning in a painting, Magritte might still have been referencing something if he was responsible for placing this particular book on the fireplace.

2.3: Growing apart

In the previous chapter, Magritte's positions within the several surrealist groups have been researched according to the viewpoints of the members. However, some new insights may be acquired when researching Magritte's positions in these groups from the artist's point of view. Even though Magritte had distanced himself from Breton in 1929 and was expelled by Mesens and Nougé in 1940, he was not a total outcast. He had made several contributions to surrealist publications, and is still historically placed within the movement today. This is because he was initially a suitable member, and when Magritte separated himself, it was not because he developed different ideas, but because Breton did.

In the early 1920s, some similarities between the surrealists and Magritte might have led to the artist's acceptance into the groups, especially by Breton. Firstly, as mentioned, Magritte was greatly interested in the work of de Chirico, something he had in common with Breton, and the metaphysical works of this painter can be viewed as one of the starting points of the surrealist movement. He had been praised by Apollinaire, who admired his ability to surprise the viewer.[101] In the first publication of *La Révolution Surréaliste,* dated 1 December 1924, Breton dedicated several pages to the description of the dreams of different people. On the first page, a dream of de Chirico was printed, followed by a dream of Breton, which results in the names of both men being on the same page, thus illustrating Breton's admiration for de Chirico.[102] Furthermore, the magazine contained illustrations by the artist, and Breton continued to use these in multiple other publications of *La Révolution Surréaliste.*

Secondly, Magritte and Breton both admired the work of Baudelaire. As mentioned, for Magritte this admiration is made obvious because he painted a translation by the poet on *La Réproduction Interdite,* both men admired Poe, and he used some of his titles. Breton had mentioned Baudelaire in his first manifesto, and shared his non-conformist and anti-canon views (his so-called *surrealist morality*). These two fundamental inspirations of both de Chirico and Baudelaire, besides the fact that Magritte had already made some surrealist friends, likely impressed Breton. Breton liked Magritte's painting style, and they shared interests that were in accordance with the idea of the surrealist revolution.

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[101] Bohn, "From Surrealism", 198.
[102] A. Breton, G. De Chirico & R. Gauthier, "Rêves", *La Révolution Surréaliste,* 1 (1 December 1924): 3.

However, Breton's opinions started to radicalize. When de Chirico moved to Paris and became affiliated with the surrealist movement, he would soon be rejected by its members. Breton was impressed by the artist's work dated from 1913 to 1919 (known as his metaphysical paintings), but did not like his later work, which was more conservative and scholarly.[103] In fact, the whole Paris group criticized the new work of de Chirico, which led to the painter leaving the city just shortly after he had arrived. In the sixth publication of *La Révolution Surréaliste,* dated 1 March 1926, Breton wonders about de Chirico's changed attitude, includes one of his works which has been crossed out with what appears to be a black marker (fig. 7), and concludes by writing "A suivre" (to be continued).[104] In the next publication of the magazine, dated 15 June 1926, Breton used four pages to elaborate on the fact that inspiration had abandoned de Chirico, and that he had lost all sense of what he was doing.[105]

The same unanticipated fate would befall Baudelaire. After praising the poet in the first surrealist manifesto, the second one contained criticism of Baudelaire's satanic tendencies, which he demonstrated when he had prayed to "God…, my father, Mariette [his childhood nurse] and Poe".[106] Breton not only despised these religious outings, he also disrespected Poe and his work. Furthermore, according to historian Marc Eigeldinger (1992), Breton also rejected Baudelaire for denouncing capitalism and the bourgeoisie, without taking any revolutionary action.[107] While Breton had admired these standpoints at first, he now thought that not enough action was taken to demonstrate them, meaning that Baudelaire's words held no real meaning.

Where Breton would often express changed opinions on people once so important to surrealism, Magritte would not. In *Ligne de Vie* he included some of de Chirico's works, he pictured Baudelaire's translation on his 1937 portrait and shared his for Poe. So, opinions that Breton and Magritte initially shared, vanished. Adding to this, Magritte disagreed with Breton's admiration of Freud and started to develop his own style and artistic production. As mentioned, this is where Magritte's commercialism clashed with Breton's (and Mesens') idea of anonymous, collective unity. The fact that he reproduced his own works is the embodiment of capitalism, and could not

[103] After de Chirico had moved to Rome, he had become preoccupied with studying renaissance art, which ultimately led to a change in his painting style. A. Merjian, "'*Il faut méditerraniser la peinture*': Giorgio de Chirico's Metaphysical Painting, Nietzsche, and the Obscurity of Light", *California Italian Studies*, 1, 1 (2010): 8.
[104] A. Breton, "Le Surréalisme et la Peinture", *La Révolution Surréaliste,* 6 (1 March 1926): 32.
[105] A. Breton, "Le Surréalisme et la Peinture", *La Révolution Surréaliste,* 7 (15 June 1926): 3-6.
[106] Breton, "Second Manifeste", 2.
[107] Eigeldinger, "André Breton", 113.

have been well received by the 'true' surrealists. Perhaps the title of *La Réproduction Interdite* is Magritte's way of mocking the radical ideals of the surrealists, where an artist was not allowed to make reproductions, while Magritte wanted to demonstrate his individualism. Breton repeatedly ridiculed Magritte's inspirations and friends, and even though Magritte admired Breton's views regarding the bourgeoisie and Breton admired Magritte's aesthetic, use of objects and rejection of western conventional painting, the ideas behind his work were completely different than what Breton ascribed to it.[108] From the beginning of Magritte's career, he did not and would not fit in with the surrealists.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, surrealism is a fluid term with no protocol for painting, use of color or material. However, considering Magritte's expulsion from both groups just a few years after he had developed his own style, it seems odd that he is still considered a surrealist painter today. One of his most famous works, *Le Fils de l'Homme* (the son of man) (1964), was painted years after he departed from and criticized both Breton and Mesens and their ideas about art, but is classified as surrealist.

There are a few explanations for this classification. Firstly, it is possible that Magritte is seen as a surrealist painter because of his affiliations with the movement, since he never clarified his art style to the public (or as Magritte would argue: people have a habit to want to understand things, which is why the artist has to be placed within a movement, while this does not have to be the case). Secondly, it is possible that people interpret Magritte's style wrongly. Today, surrealism is greatly associated with Freud's theories and the world of dreams and, apart from Breton's advocations, this is what one of surrealism's most famous artists, Salvador Dalí, wanted to express with his work. Because of Dalí's fame, it is possible that people associate dream-like scenes with surrealism, making Dalí into a benchmark for surrealist art. Because people have a habit of seeking explanation and understanding, Magritte's work could be interpreted as the depiction of the world of dreams instead of *elective affinities.* Lastly, it is possible that Magritte was actually a surrealist painter, despite his differences with its members and rejection of the term. As anthropologist Erica Hateley (2009) argues, Magritte's works always contain elements of surprise and analogical parallels to reality, which, as both Apollinaire and Breton have argued, are two fundamental principles of surrealist art.[109]

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[108] A. Rappé, "Painting the Mundane: Examining the Role of Banality in the Life and Career of René Magritte", Thesis, University of Missouri (2013), 24.
[109] E. Hateley, "Magritte and Cultural Capital: The Surreal World of Anthony Browne", *The Lion and the Unicorn,* 33, 3 (2009): 326 & 327.

Concluding remarks

Many aspects of Magritte's life, personality and interests can be recognized in his work, as is the case with *La Réproduction Interdite*. Firstly, if Magritte's mother's suicide is related to his commonly used theme of concealing faces, like Viederman suggested, this is directly visible in James' portrait, because his face cannot be seen. Magritte's occupation with metaphor and the relationships between text and objects can also be identified in *La Réproduction Interdite.* The placement of the book on the fireplace invites the viewer to wonder about the story and its relationship with the portrait, which concerns James as well as Magritte. The fact that Magritte wanted to make poetry visible can be recognized by the fact that he had chosen a novel written by a poet, and translated by one too. When reading the story of *Pym,* some correspondences with Magritte's theory can be identified, like the passage where Too-Wit sees a mirror for the first time. Most obviously, this scene contains a mirror, and so does the painting. This passage can also be viewed as a reference to Magritte's ideas about art, considering his statements on the lack of meaning in his paintings and his wish to provoke terror and discomfort for the viewer, like Too-Wit experiences in the story. The connection between this scene and Magritte's theory, together with the fact that Magritte admired both Poe and Baudelaire, indicates that Magritte might have made the decision to place this book in the painting.

Furthermore, even though he would still be associated with the Belgian surrealists, Magritte's argument with Breton marked a moment of independence for him. Interests that Magritte and Breton initially had in common changed, and Magritte did not fit in with the Paris surrealists anymore, because he still admired Poe, Baudelaire and de Chirico, and was not convinced by the importance of the unconscious when producing art. The argument shows that Magritte was not afraid to stand up for what he believed in and to develop his own ideas, which could be related to the title of *La Réproduction Interdite*, because his commercial reproductions were not accepted by the surrealists. However, he would always be labeled a surrealist artist, despite the fact that he did not want to be placed in a group and was criticizing and perhaps provoking the surrealists because their ideas about art opposed his.[110]

[110] Gablik quotes Magritte saying that he never wanted to be placed in a group, for example, of Walloon artists. Even though this example was meant as a joke, it also applies to Magritte's rejection of the surrealists, of which he did not want to be a part of either (Gablik, *René Magritte,* 9 & 13).

Chapter 3: Edward James' relationships and contributions

Edward James was born in 1907 as the youngest of five children. His parents were extremely wealthy, and lived at the West Dean estate in Sussex, England, which James inherited when his father died. James owned several properties, including a house on Wimpole Street in London, where he hosted Dalí Magritte. James remained close friends with the European surrealists, however the war made it difficult for both James and Magritte to communicate through letters, and when James settled in California after the war, this marked the end of their friendship.

James was a patron of surrealist art, and he was in close contact with the surrealist groups in Paris and in London. In addition to hosting Dalí in his house to paint for him, James supported Dalí financially and had him design appliances, for example, his *Lobster Telephone* (1936) and *Mae West Lips Sofia* (1937) were designed for James' West Dean estate. After moving to Los Angeles, he relocated to Xilitla in Mexico, where he created a surrealist sculpture garden called *Las Pozas,* making him the only surrealist to ever translate the cultural movement into landscape.[111] Throughout his lifetime he commissioned and sponsored surrealist painters and poets, one of them being René Magritte. James was also a poet, and Adès argues that his poetry reflects themes of "*fin de siècle* aestheticism and a love for the natural world nourished by the English Romantic tradition", however he had experienced little success with his writings.[112] Even though James was extremely involved with the surrealist groups and artists, he was never an official member of the English group, perhaps because of the fact that he was not successful as an artist or did not identify as such.

La Réproduction Interdite was painted after Magritte left London. James was not there to oversee the process, but the artist did have a photograph for reference. Considering James' surrealist admirations and Magritte's inspirations, it would be interesting to determine the place of this portrait within the artist's oeuvre. Perhaps James wanted Magritte to portray him in a certain way, or perhaps the patron influenced the way his portrait was to be painted. To determine this, it is important to research the nature of the relationship between Magritte and James. Because James had hosted Dalí in a similar manner, it might also be useful to research his relationship with James, in addition to possible similarities between these relationships, to identify James' characteristics and thus his possible influences. Secondly, a visual analysis and investigation of Magritte's other

[111] M. Lipscomb, "Landscapes of Revelation: an Inquiry into Surrealism in the Landscape", Thesis, University of Georgia (2003), 16.
[112] Adès, "Edward James", 86.

portrait of James might expose some similarities with *La Réproduction Interdite*, aiding in the identifying of influences and the work's place in Magritte's oeuvre.

3.1: Similarities between artist and patron

In January of 1937, a month before Magritte would leave for London, James sent the artist a letter, inviting him: "My dear Magritte, I would be delighted if you could come and spend a month or two in London, here at 35 Wimpole Street. You were so kind to me in Paris and took me to all the fine museums. So I should like, in turn, to show you London and the English country-side with all its beauties, which are many. Write to me giving the date of your arrival, and spend a month or two at my house, as soon as you can."[113] Magritte responded, the two agreed on payment for the commissions, and from February 12 until March 19 1937 he was in London. Gaßner mentions a letter to Mesens in which James wrote that Magritte agreed to a payment of £250 for the three panels (*Le Modèle Rouge, Jeunesse Illustré* and *Au Seuil de la Liberté*).[114] James also mentioned that this is much more money than he paid Dalí, suggesting that the patron was eager to host Magritte and own his works.

Magritte and James appeared to have a good relationship, because three days after arriving in London, Magritte wanted to give James a present since the artist felt so welcomed by his patron. Gaßner mentions a letter Magritte sent to his wife on February 17, where he asked her to find and send him a "Napoleon death mask".[115] This refers to plaster copies of a mask, made of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte when he had died in 1821, that were being produced commercially in the 1930s. Magritte is known to have painted at least three other Napoleon masks around 1932, and now the one for James in 1937.[116] The artist painted the mask light blue, resembling the color of the sky, with white clouds, and the title of the Napoleon mask (and of the other masks) is *L'Avenir des Statues* (the future of statues). James seemed to have enjoyed this gift, as he had his photograph taken with it by the English photographer Norman Parkinson in 1939 (fig. 8). According to Gaßner, there is a surrealist element in this photograph, because the living head of James juxtaposed to the dead head of Napoleon embodies the transition of the conscious world into the unconscious world.[117] Even though this gift implies that Magritte and James were friends, Gaßner mentions that

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[113] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 82. This letter clarifies the fact that Magritte and James did meet in Paris, however my uncertainty lies in the alleged date of this meeting, and if this was actually the first time they had met.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 88.
[116] Sylvester, *René Magritte Vol II,* 424, 425 & 434.
[117] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 88.

scholars suggest that James and Magritte did not get along/ were not friends.[118] He quotes Sylvester to justify this claim, who has written that James would mostly leave Magritte to his own devices. Furthermore, he quotes Mesens, who said that he had to persuade Magritte to moderate his "deliberately provocative petit bourgeois manner", in order not to offend James' "aesthetic sensibilities".[119] This, however, does not suggest that the artist and patron were not cordial towards each other, especially considering the arguments between Magritte and Mesens. In an essay collection on James' life and work, Adès argues that James and Magritte did have a close relationship.[120] So, by suggesting that scholars think James and Magritte were not friends, Gaßner might have been slightly exaggerating. Some tension is apparent in correspondence between Magritte and James in 1938 because Magritte expected James to support him financially, but this is irrelevant in this paper since it happened a year after *La Réproduction Interdite* was painted.

As mentioned, James was not an official member of the surrealist group. According to Adès, membership of the English group was loosely defined, and mostly recognized by participating in surrealist exhibitions.[121] Apart from his relationships with Dalí and Magritte, little scholarly attention has been paid to James' relationships with other artists. However, his involvement with two men, combined with the fact that James was not an official member of the surrealist group, does provide an insight into his preferences. To identify James' influences on *La Réproduction Interdite,* it might be helpful to determine the reasons James had taken a particular interest in Dalí and Magritte, hosting them in his house. Here, Dalí is of importance because the commissions and way of hosting are so similar with Magritte. These two artists both had problems with Breton's surrealism, because even though Dalí would not be officially expelled by Breton until 1939 and Magritte by Mesens in 1940, the two had always held different views on surrealism than the other members of the groups. Dalí did not denounce Freud like Magritte did, but his commercialism became problematic for the surrealists, just like with Magritte. Perhaps this is what attracted James, because as an admirer of surrealism he knew that Magritte would paint reproductions of his work for him, something that Mesens viewed as commercial and something that other surrealists might not have done.

Another possible reason for James' fondness of artists who did not fit into the surrealist norms is the fact that James did not either. In 1934, his wife wanted to divorce him, accusing him of

[118] Ibid., 85 & 122.
[119] Sylvester, *René Magritte Vol. II,* 52.
[120] Adès, "Edward James", 83 & 84.
[121] Adès, "Notes on Two", 36.

being a homosexual, which James countered by stating that his wife had committed adultery, something that was not at all a respectable thing to do, resulting in him being rejected by society.[122] Even though James won and his wife's argument was dismissed, her ideas must not have come out of nowhere. According to Dalí's biographer Ian Gibson (1997), James' biographers agree that he was actually homosexual.[123] In general, the surrealists did not accept this, and Breton was even an outspoken homophobe.[124] Perhaps this 'anomaly' (in the eyes of the surrealists) resulted in James searching for people who would understand him and share his feelings, and perhaps these people could have been Dalí and Magritte. Despite the fact that Dalí was, like Breton, an outspoken homophobe, he might have struggled with homosexual feelings himself, according to Gibson. He had experiences multiple problems with his sexuality (for example a small penis, premature ejaculation and impotence), and allegedly had a relationship with Federico García Lorca (who was openly gay).[125] Even though there is no proof of this, art historians and psychiatrists agree that the painter was, in his art, more occupied with the male body than with the female body.[126] More interestingly, Gibson thinks that Dalí was interested in James not only for his wealth, but because the painter was always preoccupied with sexual ambiguity.[127] If James also valued Dalí's sexual ambiguity, questions arise about his interest in Magritte. Even though Magritte was likely heterosexual, he was no stranger to themes of sexuality. He had had a sexual affair, recurrently painted female nudes, and one might go as far as to relate his mother's suicide to the exploration of sexual themes in his work.[128] This would mean that James could have reached out to both Dalí and Magritte because these surrealists would understand him and his sexual confusions.

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[122] S. Kusunoki, "Breaking Canons - Edward James: His Life and Work", in *A Surreal Life: Edward James, 1907-1984,* ed. N. Coleby (Brighton, EN: Royal Pavilion, Libraries & Museums, 1998), 25.
[123] I. Gibson, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí* (London, EN: Faber and Faber, 1997), 328.
[124] C. Miller, "Surrealism's Homophobia", *October,* 173 (2020): 215 & 221. In the 11th issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* (March 15, 1928), a transcript of conversations between a group of surrealists about sexuality is published (*Recherches sur la sexualité*). In his article, Miller provides multiple quotes of Breton, including: "I accuse homosexuals of confronting human tolerance with a mental and moral deficiency [déficit] which tends to erect itself into a system and to paralyse every enterprise I respect." and "I am absolutely opposed to continuing the discussion of this subject. If this promotion of homosexuality carries on, I will leave this meeting forthwith." This statement does contradict some of Breton's ideas, since he did accept some homosexual individuals on exceptional occasions. For example, he had taken inspiration from and admired the work of Rimbaud, who was in a gay relationship with the French poet Paul Verlaine.
[125] Ibid., 119.
[126] Some examples include Z. Kováry, "The Enigma of Desire: Salvador Dalí and the conquest of the irrational", *PsyArt* (2009): 5; W. Holcombe, "Salvador Dalí Illustrates Don Quixote", Dissertation, (Arizona State University 2017), 42, 46.
[127] Gibson, *The Shameful,* 328.
[128] As described by Freud in his *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (beyond the pleasure principle) (1920), people are driven by life instincts as well as death instincts. Life instincts include sexuality and creativeness, while

A deeper understanding could also have been formed by experienced rejection. James had been rejected from English society, Dalí had known rejection from his father, his country (fleeing Spain during Spanish Civil War) and would soon face rejection from the surrealist group, and Magritte had experienced this with the Paris surrealists of Breton, right before being dismissed by Mesens. Understanding these feelings might have brought artist and patron together and strengthened their relationship.

These possible reasons for James to befriend both Dalí and Magritte suggest a close relationship between artist and patron, which in turn might have affected *La Réproduction Interdite*. A final possible reason for James to reach out to Magritte is their mutual occupation with poetry. James was a poet, and, as mentioned, Magritte took great inspirations from poetry. It is not entirely clear which poets provided James with inspiration, so this connection relies on speculation, and might have just been a coincidental mutual interest. In the conclusion of this chapter these findings will be compared to *La Réproduction Interdite,* but first the other portrait of James by Magritte will be examined to identify possible similarities.

3.2: The pleasure principle

Magritte's other portrait of James was, like *La Réproduction Interdite*, painted following the painter's return from London It is known today as *Le Principe du Plaisir* (the pleasure principle) (fig. 9), and is currently part of a private collection.[129] Originally, *Le Principe du Plaisir* was called *La Guérison Sévère* (the severe recovery), which Magritte mentions in a letter to James, dated 18 May 1937. According to Gaßner, Magritte references an intestinal infection which James was suffering from at that time.[130] During summer of that year, James had to undergo treatment in Paris, which indicates the seriousness of the infection. The reason for the changed title is not known; perhaps James did not want to be reminded of his illness, or perhaps Magritte did not want to remind him. It cannot be certain who decided on the new title.[131]

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death instincts include destructiveness and repetition compulsion. Freud has written that all humans hold an unconscious desire to die, but that desire is overruled by their life drive. However, these two drives do indicate a connection between death and sex. Not to mention Freud's theories about son's sexual attraction to their mothers (K. Cherry, "Freud's Theories of Life and Death Instincts", 2022. Downloaded on March 24, 2022. https://www.verywellmind.com/life-and-death-instincts-2795847). However, Magritte would never have admitted a possible connection between the two, and would be appalled by a Freudian psychoanalysis.

[129] I write the term 'known today', because Magritte had originally used a different title for the work.

[130] Gaßner, "Elective Affinities", 92 & 123.

[131] It is not known if changing titles is something Magritte had done often. Only one other case of this is described by Gaßner. In 1937, Magritte replaced the title of a work called *Le Foyer de la Dame* (house/

It cannot be determined exactly when Magritte finished painting the portrait, however he started working on it around May 18, because this is when Magritte sent James a letter stating that he had finished painting *La Réproduction Interdite,* in addition to adding a sketch for *Le Principe du Plaisir.*[132] On the portrait, the upper body of a man wearing a suit with a white shirt and a red tie is visible. He is sitting at a table made of dark wood, and on the table lies a rock-like object. The man's left hand is hanging, his fingers not visible, while his right hand is on the table. His face is not visible because it is replaced by a radiant light, resembling a bright lamp, or even the sun. The background is dark.

It is known that this man is supposed to be Edward James, mainly because James commissioned this work as a portrait. Additionally, Magritte painted this work according to preparatory photographs, just like he had done with *La Réproduction Interdite* (fig. 10 and fig. 11). According to Gaßner, these photos were taken a few weeks after Magritte had left London, when James was in Paris, by the surrealist photographer Man Ray.[133] On fig. 10, James can be seen, sitting at a table, with his left hand on the table and his right hand is under it. An object, appearing to be a rock, is on the table in front of James' right arm. On fig. 11, James is sitting at a table with his right hand on the table and his left hand partially hanging, because his arm is resting on the chair. An object, appearing to be a rock, is on the table in front of James' left arm. Both photographs contain a framing square, presumably drawn with a pen, suggesting the framing Magritte was to adhere to for the painted portrait. The second photograph looks most similar to the finished painting, because of the right hand on the table, however, Magritte has made a lot of changes and did not simply reproduce this photograph. The artist changed James' tie; in the photographs his tie has a mandela-like pattern, while the tie in the painting is simply red. James's suit in the photographs is grey and appears to be made of wool, while on the painting, the suit is darker, colored dark blue or even black, and smoother; it appears to be made of silk. Furthermore, Magritte removed the chair (which was visible in the photographs), placed the rock-like object further away from James, and removed the background, which contained a white beam in both photographs. Lastly, and most importantly, Magritte adjusted the lighting. The source of light for the photographs appears to be originating on James' right side, because of the shadows on the left side of his face and on the left side of the rock-like object. In the painting, James' face is the source of light, forcing Magritte to alter the shadows. The rock-like object is casting a shadow towards the

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hearth of the lady) with *Printemps Éternel* (spring eternal). The reason for this is not known. Magritte was still not content with the painting, as he overpainted it in 1938, again for an unknown reason. The overpainted canvas is now *La Durée Poignardée.* Ibid., 125.

[132] Ibid., 98.

[133] Ibid., 123.

viewer, and below the chest the body is almost entirely covered in shadow. So, in both *Le Principe du Plaisir* and *La Réproduction Interdite,* Magritte painted (or reproduced) from photographs in Brussels, did not depict James' face and altered the background and James' suit, suggesting highly similar conditions and methods.

These similar conditions could be used to verify theories about *La Réproduction Interdite,* for example the title as a provocation of the surrealists. *Le Principe du Plaisir* the French translation of a term Freud introduced in his 1911 publication; *Formulierungen Über Die Zwei Prinzipien Des Psychischen Geschehens* (formulations on the two principles of mental functioning), which means that humans are constantly seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. This *Lustprinzip* is countered by the *Realitätsprinzip* (reality principle), which allows humans to defer instant gratification because in reality, this is not always possible (for example, the pleasure principle is linked to the libido, which is rarely capable of instant gratification). Why would Magritte choose this title for the portrait? Magritte had openly denounced Freud's theories about psychoanalysis, dreams and interpretations. However, this is not the first time the painter had directly referenced Freud. In 1927, Magritte painted a work called *La Clef des Songes* (the interpretation of dreams), which refers to Freud's ideas about dreams and what Breton wrote about this in the first surrealist manifesto. According to psychiatrist Marcus Silverman (2012), Magritte used Freudian concepts to create the "uncanny situations" in his works, while simultaneously refusing to be analyzed by these concepts.[134] He mentions Viederman, who argues that Magritte denounced Freud's work because he wanted to retain mystery and secret in his painting, and that this is how Magritte exercises control; the secret must not be revealed.[135] Both psychiatrists explain their claims by stating that Magritte did not want to be analyzed because he had suppressed the trauma of losing his mother, but this does not explain why Magritte would appreciate references to Freud in his painting. If the artist did not want himself and his paintings to be psychologically analyzed and openly criticized Freud's theories, it seems unlikely that he would admire Freud's theories in an objective manner. A reason for the title of Magritte's 1927 painting is his involvement with the Paris group and Breton, who was inspired by Freud's methods, when he wanted to impress and demonstrate his worth to his new friend. For the choosing of the title *Le Principe du Plaisir,* two possibilities arise. The first explanation would be that James was responsible for the title of the work, as opposed to Magritte. James' opinions about Freud's theories are unknown, however he could have been biased by spending time with Dalí in the years prior to Magritte's visit. Dalí adored Freud and his work, because his paintings are not

[134] M. Silverman, "René Magritte and the denial of meaning", *Modern Psychoanalysis,* 37.2 (2012): 81.
[135] Viederman, "René Magritte", 971.

based on *elective affinities,* but on the world of dreams, and he even drew him when they met for the first time in London in 1938, where James was also present.[136] James had even requested a psychoanalysis from Freud, suggesting that the patron was not skeptical of these methods like Magritte was.[137] Secondly, as literary historian Scott Freer (2013) argues, Magritte referenced Freud ironically, because he used Freud's writings literally by transforming dream visions into an altered state. The artist is mocking Freud by suggesting his "uncanny situations" are related to psychological disturbance.[138] This could be an interpretation of Silverman, however Freer does not mention the scholar in his article. This theory corresponds with the provocative intent of *La Réproduction Interdite*'s title, and while this cannot be verified for either portrait, the possibility of surrealist criticism in both titles contributes to its likelihood.

Concluding remarks

Possible reasons for James to hire and host Dalí and Magritte might offer insight into the nature of their relationships, which could in turn be used to examine *La Réproduction Interdite*, James' influences on the portrait, and its place in Magritte's oeuvre.

Based on similarities between Dalí, Magritte and James, three reasons could have led to the patron taking in an interest in these two artists in particular. Firstly, because both Dalí and Magritte were commercial artists (as opposed to the other surrealists who valued anonymity and collectivism), James was able to commission his own requests, in addition to reproductions. Secondly, James' alleged sexual confusions could have caused him to seek like-minded individuals. While Dalí's sexual issues are widely recognized, in Magritte's case this can only be connected to his affair and exploration of sexual subjects in his work. Thirdly, because James' divorce resulted in his rejection from English society, he might have sought people who understood this. Dalí had known rejection in his personal life, but more importantly from the surrealists, just like Magritte had and was about to. These shared feelings could mean friendships with strong connections and deeper understanding, which could be related to *La Réproduction Interdite.* While James' impersonal backsides on the portrait could be viewed as a visualization of sexual issues, it is more likely reflective of rejection, because this is what the viewer experiences directly. If a viewer had met James' gaze in the reflection of the mirror, a connection would have been formed, while the

[136] S. Romm, "Sigmund Freud and Salvador Dalí: Personal Moments", *American Imago,* 40, 4 (1983): 337.
[137] J. Harris, "The Metamorphosis of Narcissus", *Arch Gen Psychiatry,* 65, 2 (2005): 124.
[138] S. Freer, "Magritte: the Uncanny Sublime", *Literature and Theology,* 27, 3 (2013): 339.

absence of this reflection does not only result in (Magritte's) terror, it also results in the experience of rejection and a created distance.

When studying *Le Principe du Plaisir,* its preparatory photographs and James' invisible face correspond with *La Réproduction Interdite.* Similarities like these exemplify the adjustments that Magritte made himself, in addition to possible influences of James. In both portraits, Magritte altered the background, and, obviously, did not depict James' face. The changed title of *Le Principe du Plaisir* could be viewed as a provocation of the surrealists and their ideas, assuming Magritte chose this title, as is the case with *La Réproduction Interdite.* Because surrealist criticism can be identified in both portraits, it becomes more likely that Magritte chose these titles than if only one portrait contained this reference.

Based on these findings, Magritte was presumably responsible for the title of *La Réproduction Interdite*, in addition to the novel, background and invisible face. However, James' invisible face could have been a mutual decision, considering the emotions the portrait evokes, which both men were experiencing at that time. The examination of the reasons why James reached out to Magritte (and Dalí), as well as the nature of their relationship, contributes to the possibility of this mutual decision, and thus influence on the portrait.

Conclusion

La Réproduction Interdite is a painting that raises many questions, because the naturalistic work contains an unnatural element. Even though, according to Magritte, it cannot be interpreted or explained, the portrait consists of numerous identifiable influences. Considering Magritte's rich social life with many connections, in addition to his distinctive painting style, this paper has focused on possible influences that might have played a role in the painting of this particular portrait, as well as its placement within Magritte's oeuvre.

Breton, inspired by the works and ideas of Rimbaud, Hegel, Freud, de Chirico and Baudelaire, had very clear ideas of what surrealism should be. His *psychic automatism,* advocation for the importance of dreams and the unconscious and Marxist beliefs about society's upper class and a collective and anonymous revolution were to be followed undisputedly. Contemporary artists, as well as 'trans-historical surrealists', who challenged these ideas or did not evolve synchronously with Breton risked expulsion and ridicule. This disassociation could be rooted in logic and expected, like Nougé's decision to focus on success while knowingly displeasing the surrealists, but it could also be based on sudden new insights, like when Breton suddenly decided that even though he admired Baudelaire's revolutionary standpoints, he detested his passivity and could thus no longer consider him an important inspiration of the surrealist movement (never mind the fact that Baudelaire had been dead for several decades).

Regardless of the almost radical nature of the movement, Magritte still decided he wanted to be a part of it. Perhaps because of his Belgian surrealist friends, or perhaps because of his lack of success on his own, the artist joined the Paris group, found some common interests with its members and developed his own style. Even though Magritte had not officially shared his ideas about *elective affinities* (which he did not do until almost a decade later), his *Les Mots et les Images* illustrates the origins and blooming of his later theory. Magritte's oeuvre started to assume its distinctive form, inspired by de Chirico's metaphysics, Baudelaire's and Poe's poetry, his personal experiences, and *elective affinities* to solve the problem of the object and create a mystery. The maturing of Magritte's style was not an effortless process and took place during a turbulent period in his life. After disconnecting from Breton in 1929, Magritte was on the threshold of refining his style and experiencing international success, partly because of his rejection by Mesens in 1940, marking his independence from all surrealist groups. This eleven-year period of transition was thus crucial for Magritte's oeuvre, because it reflects his development into the successful artist known today, whose work is globally recognized, appreciated, and still characterized as surrealist art.

For this reason, scholars have wrongfully neglected *La Réproduction Interdite.* The portrait was painted eight years after Magritte parted from Breton, at which time he developed his lecture series about *elective affinities* and three years before he would be dismissed by Mesens, placing the work amidst a vital part of this transitional period. In addition to Magritte's depictions of his personal inspirations and *elective affinities,* this was the time when the artist started developing his individualism and desire for commercial success, ultimately leading to his independence.

This paper aimed to identify, analyze and distinguish internal and external influences on *La Réproduction Interdite,* aiding in its placement in Magritte's oeuvre, in addition to emphasizing its historical importance for the artist. Ultimately, almost all individual components of *La Réproduction Interdite* can be attributed and explained. The surrealists introduced Magritte to de Chirico, whose style strongly resembles that of Magritte, and Baudelaire, whose translation is on the fireplace. The surrealist occupation with poetry allowed Magritte to develop his interests, resulting in an admiration of Poe, who wrote the original English version of the novel on the portrait. Magritte likely decided to depict this particular book, because it is a combination of two of his favorite poets, at least one of whom he had become familiar with because of the surrealists.

Magritte seemingly decided himself to not depict James' face, because this is a recurring theme in his work which can be traced to his mother's suicide. The object of the mirror might also have been the choice of the artist, and has two possible reasons. Firstly, just like Poe, Magritte was interested in themes of doubles and the boundaries between art and reality (which could be translated into the boundaries between a mirror's reflection and reality). Secondly, it is an elaboration of the work's title, which states that reproduction is forbidden, just like James' reflection in the mirror. The title of the work, again likely chosen by Magritte himself, does not only refer to its visual application on the portrait, but also to Magritte's personal conflicts. The surrealist's desire for anonymity clashed with Magritte's desire for success and individuality, and the work's title could refer to their criticism regarding the fact that Magritte reproduced his works. By using this title, Magritte outed his dissatisfaction with the surrealists, which he likely also did with *Le Principe du Plaisir.* Because both of these titles can be viewed as a provocation of surrealist ideas, this theory becomes more plausible.

James' influences are probably limited to the emotions represented in the portrait. He was experiencing feelings of rejection, as was Magritte, and because of the absence of James' face in the mirror's reflection, these feelings are communicated to the viewer. Common experiences and feelings are important for this conclusion, which is why attention has been paid to the reasons why

James hosted Magritte, and these reasons have been clarified by additionally researching the same for Dalí.

A large number of these influences fit within the idea of a transitional period for Magritte. Because he was still partly attached to the surrealists, yet ready to separate from them, a lot of provocation can be identified in *La Réproduction Interdite*. At first glance, the portrait seems to fit appropriately within Magritte's oeuvre, considering the concealed face and his *elective affinities.* However, after an in-depth analysis of the work, in addition to research about its placement historically, this work has proved to be crucial in Magritte's transitional period, resulting in establishing his identity as an artist. Breaking with Breton, reproducing his own works for James and finally provoking surrealist ideas and admiring artists whom Breton despised ultimately led to Magritte as a recognized individual, who would never end up in passive inactivity.

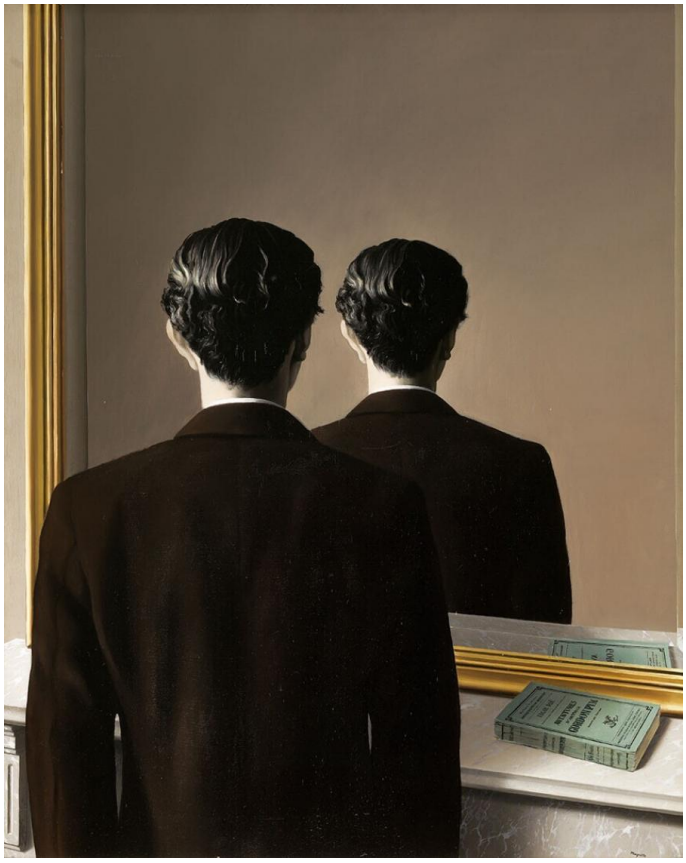

Fig. 1: René Magritte, *La Réproduction Interdite*, 1937. Oil on linnen, 81 x 65,5 cm (Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands).

Fig. 2: René Magritte, *Edward James in front of "Au Seuil de la Liberté",* 1937. Photograph, gelatin silver print, 10,8 x 16,7 cm (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA).

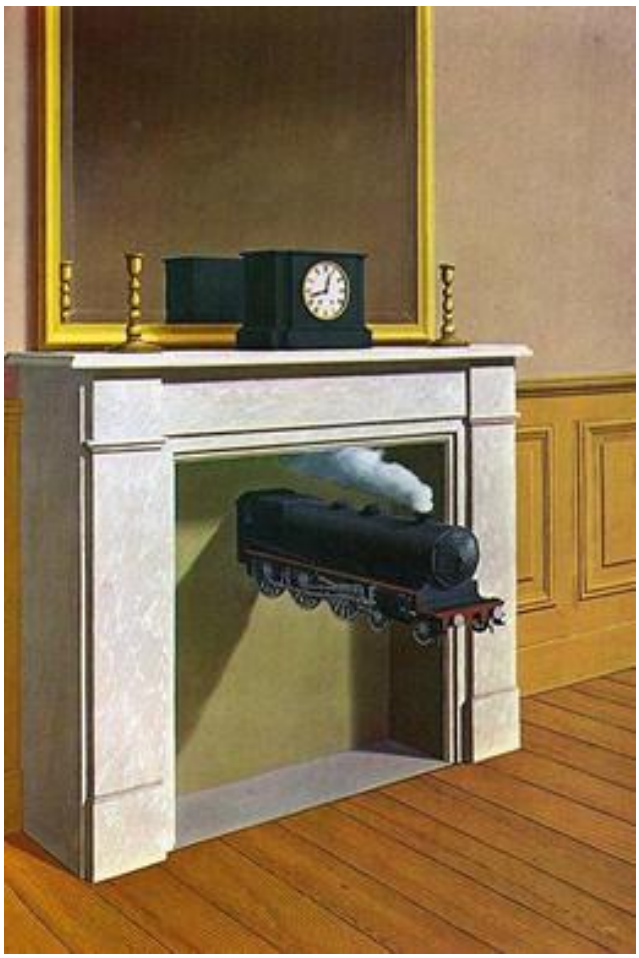

Fig. 3: René Magritte, *La Durée Poignardée,* 1938. Oil on canvas, 147 x 98,7 cm (Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA).

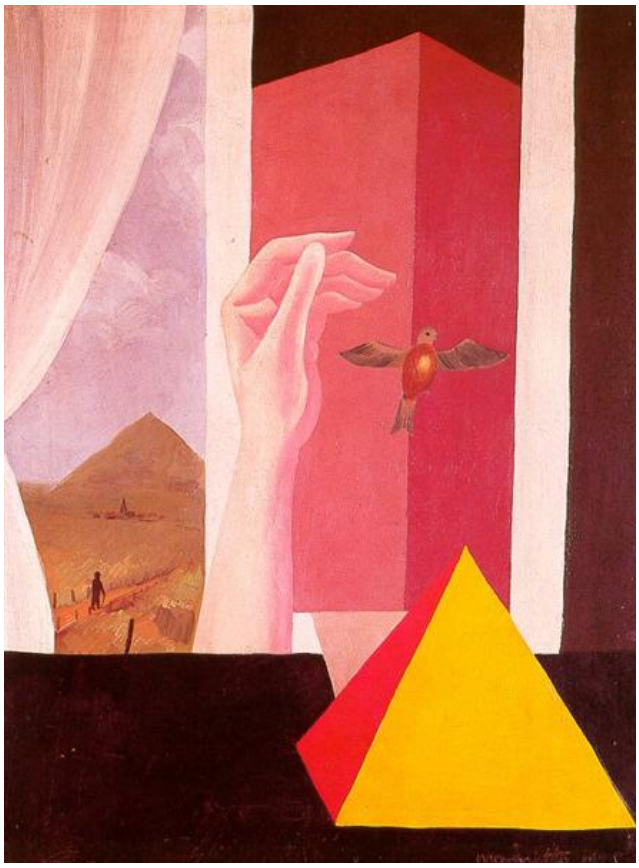

Fig. 4: René Magritte, *La Fenêtre*, 1925. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown (private collection).

Pourquoi la Révolution Surréaliste avait cessé de paraître

SECOND MANIFESTE DU SURRÉALISME

En dépit des démarches particulières à chacun de ceux qui s'en sont réclamés ou s'en réclament, on finira bien par accorder que le surréalisme ne tendit à rien tant qu'à provoquer, au point de vue intellectuel et moral, une *crise de conscience* de l'espèce la plus générale et la plus grave et que l'obtention ou la non-obtention de ce résultat peut seule décider de sa réussite ou de son échec historique.

Au point de vue intellectuel il s'agissait, il s'agit encore d'éprouver par tous les moyens et de faire reconnaître à tout prix le caractère factice des vieilles antinomies destinées hypocritement à prévenir toute agitation insolite de la part de l'homme, ne serait-ce qu'en lui donnant une idée indigente de ses moyens, qu'en le défiant d'échapper dans une mesure valable à la contrainte universelle. L'épouvantail de la mort, les cafés-chantants de l'au-delà, le naufrage de la plus belle raison dans le sommeil, l'écrasant rideau de l'avenir, les tours de Babel, les miroirs d'inconsistance, l'infranchissable mur d'argent éclaboussé de cervelle, ces images trop saisissantes de la catastrophe humaine ne sont peut-être que des images. Tout porte à croire qu'il existe un certain point de l'esprit d'où la vie et la mort, le réel et l'imaginaire, le passé et le futur, le communicable et l'incommunicable, le haut et le bas cessent d'être perçus contradictoirement. Or, c'est en vain qu'on chercherait à l'activité surréaliste un autre mobile que l'espoir de détermination de ce point. On voit assez par là combien il serait absurde de lui prêter un sens uniquement destructeur, ou constructeur : le point dont il est question est *a fortiori* celui où la construction et la destruction cessent de pouvoir être brandies l'une contre l'autre. Il est clair, aussi, que le surréalisme n'est pas intéressé à tenir grand compte de ce qui se produit à côté de lui sous prétexte d'art, voire d'anti-art, de philosophie ou d'anti-philosophie, en un mot de tout ce qui n'a pas pour fin l'anéantissement de l'être en un brillant, intérieur et aveugle, qui ne soit pas plus l'âme de la glace que celle du feu. Que pourraient bien attendre de l'expérience surréaliste ceux qui gardent quelque souci de la place qu'ils occuperont *dans le monde*? En ce lieu mental d'où l'on ne peut plus entreprendre que pour soi-même une périlleuse mais, pensons-nous, une suprême reconnaissance, il ne saurait être question non plus d'attacher la moindre importance aux pas de ceux qui arrivent ou aux pas de ceux qui sortent, ces pas se produisant dans

Fig. 5: André Breton, *Second Manifeste du Surréalisme,* 1929, page 1 in the magazine *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12. Lipstick and printer ink on paper, dimensions unknown (Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands).

Fig. 6: René Magritte & unknown photographer, *Je ne vois pas la (femme) cachée dans la forêt*, 1929, page 73 in the magazine *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12. Oil on canvas & printed photographs, dimensions unknown (Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands)

Fig. 7: Artist unknown, *Unknown work by Giorgio de Chirico, crossed out with black marker,* 1926. Printed magazine and black marker. Dimensions and current location unknown

Fig. 8: Norman Parkinson, *Edward James*, 1939. Photograph. Dimensions and current location unknown

Fig. 9: René Magritte, *Le Principe du Plaisir,* 1937. Oil on canvas, 73 x 54,5 cm (private collection).

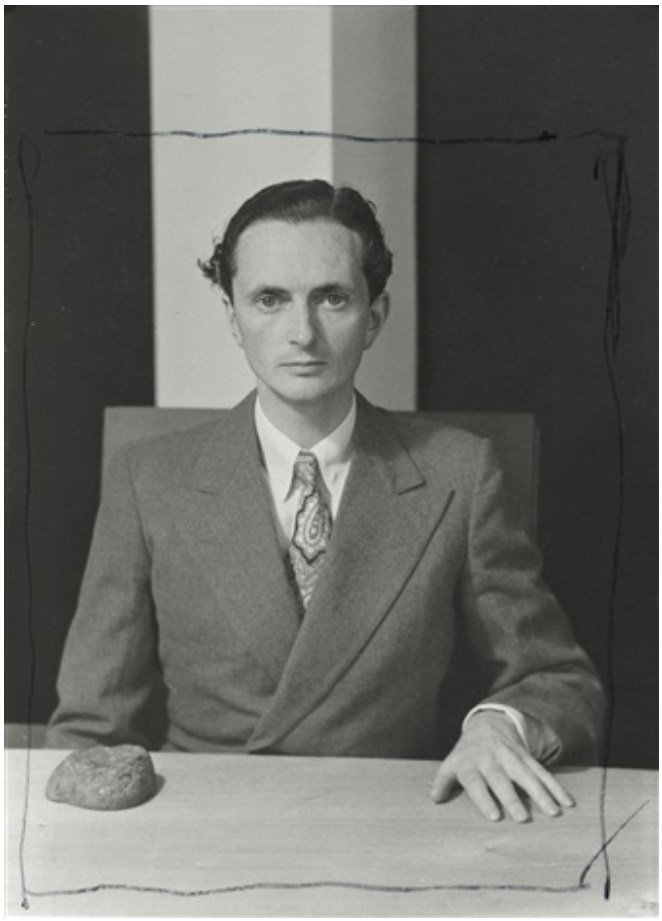

Fig. 10: Man Ray, *Edward James*, 1937. Gelatin silver contact print with ink cropping marks, 9,3 x 6,5 cm (Centre Pompidou, Paris, France).

Fig. 11: Man Ray, *Edward James*, 1937. Gelatin silver contact print with ink cropping marks, 9,1 x 7,1 cm (Centre Pompidou, Paris, France).

Credits Illustrations

Fig. 1: La Réproduction Interdite (Verboden af te Beelden). Downloaded on April 1, 2022. https://www.boijmans.nl/collectie/kunstwerken/4232/la-reproduction-interdite-verboden-af-te-beelden.

Fig. 2: Edward James in front of "On the Threshold of Liberty". Downloaded on April 1, 2022. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/265196.

Fig. 3: Time Transfixed. Downloaded on April 1, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_Transfixed#/media/File:Time_transfixed.jpg.

Fig. 4: The Window. Downloaded on April 1, 2022. https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/thewindow-1925.

Fig. 5: Second Manifeste du Surréalisme. Downloaded on April 1, 2022. https://library.csun.edu/SCA/Peek-in-the-Stacks/surrealism.

Fig. 6: Vis-à-vis: Artist's Portraits Capture Collaboration and Friendship. Downloaded on April 1, 2022. https://www.phillips.com/article/3880061/vis-a-vis-artists-portraits-captures-collaborationand-friendship.

Fig. 7: Le Surréalisme et la Peinture. Downloaded on June 10, 2022. https://inventin.lautre.net/livres/La-revolution-surrealiste-6.pdf.

Fig. 8: Norman Parkinson: Portrait of Edward James (with Magritte artwork), 1939. Downloaded on April 13, 2022. https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/324329610635396125/.

Fig. 9: René Magritte's Le Principe du Plaisir at Sotheby's Impressionist and Modern Art Sale. Downloaded on June 10, 2022. https://www.artdependence.com/articles/ren%C3%A9-magrittes-le-principe-du-plaisir-at-sothebys-impressionist-and-modern-art-sale/.

Fig. 10: Edward James, 1937 by Man Ray. Downloaded on April 13, 2022. http://www.artnet.com/artists/man-ray/edward-james-1937-iC4w8qcuR9c2JuM4PkUrCw2.

Fig. 11: Edward James. Downloaded on April 13, 2022. http://www.manray-photo.com/catalog/popup_image.php?pID=1331&image=0.

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