

*Mirrors triptych technology: Remediation and Translation  
Figures*

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*René Magritte, La Reproduction Interdite (portrait d'Edward James),  
1937.  
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans-van-Beuningen*



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*My painting is visible images which conceal nothing; they evoke mystery and, indeed, when one sees one of my pictures, one asks oneself this simple question 'What does that mean'? It does not mean anything, because mystery means nothing either, it is unknowable.*

*René Magritte*

## 1.0 Introduction

A man looking at himself in a mirror that reflects not his face but his back is indeed a mystery – unless one asks how *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James* was painted or, in other words, what is the mystery (craft) used for creating such a painting?

The controversial David Hockney and Charles Falco<sup>1</sup> theory (2001) – which argues that most artists in the "High Tradition", going all the way back to Bruges in the 1420s, were deploying a variety of optical devices in their work – could offer an answer to the question pertaining to how "*La Reproduction*" was painted. Magritte, like others painters (including Van Eyck through Caravaggio, Lotto, Velazquez, Vermeer, Chardin, Ingres, and others) who, according to Hockney and Falco, were using precursors of photographic cameras and different types of mirrors or mirror-like devices for centuries before the invention of chemical fixatives in 1839, can be assumed to having used mirrors in order to paint his portrait of a man looked at from his back.

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<sup>1</sup> Hockney, D. (2001) *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*. New York, Viking.

The cover of Edgar Allan Poe's novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym from Nantucket*, as painted in "*La Reproduction*", could be an allusion to Edward James as painted from the back with the aid of two mirrors for, in the middle of *The Narrative*, we find the following paragraph:

"...There were two large mirrors in the cabin, and here was the acme of their amazement. Too-wit was the first to approach them, and he had got in the middle of the cabin, with his face to one and his back to the other, before he fairly perceived them. Upon raising his eyes and seeing his reflected self in the glass, I thought the savage would go mad; but, upon turning short round to make a retreat, and beholding himself a second time in the opposite direction, I was afraid he would expire upon the spot. No persuasion could prevail upon him to take another look; throwing himself upon the floor, with his face buried in his hands, he remained thus until we were obliged to drag him upon deck..." (Poe, 1838, Ch 18. p. 3).<sup>2</sup>

This is the figure of the "uncultured man" or someone who meets a mirror and Mirrors' play upon his perception for the first time in his life, a being who falls horrified by the mirrors in the front and those behind him. He sees the visible – his face – and the invisible – his back – with the aid of mirrors. In doing so he reminds those who have forgotten of how frightening looking at a mirror can be, whether from the front or the back. It could be ventured that in quoting Poe by omitting the front mirror but leaving the rear mirror in the painting, Magritte stresses a chimerical more than an actual mirror as a model. Susan Sontag's question about the primacy of love or aphrodisiacs, while mocking the Hockney theory<sup>3</sup> and the unsolved riddle of how Magritte painted "*La reproduction*", is accompanied by reminiscences of the tradition in which technology, as mediating representation, was and continues to be at the center of the creative experience.

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<sup>2</sup> . Poe. E. A. (1838) *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. New York: Harper & Brothers,

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Narrative\\_of\\_Arthur\\_Gordon\\_Pym](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Narrative_of_Arthur_Gordon_Pym).

<sup>3</sup> Sontag mocked Hockney's protestations that his theory doesn't diminish the Old Masters. "If David Hockney's thesis is correct, it would be a bit like finding out that all the great lovers of history have been using Viagra," she said. <http://www.koopfilms.com/hockney/articles.html>.

Magritte figurates one man and all men in the eternal position of seeing, suggesting that all mirrors function from this stance, as if postponing the answer of how the painting was painted. In the process, he enlarges the mystery of men's positions in the world and sight/in addition to their manner of seeing.

While reading in order to write this work, it seemed to me that the most researched motif in all disciplines was and is the mirror, as it I suppose might happen when one meditates with such concentration on a specific theme or subject. Nevertheless, more than any other subject, the mirror seems to carry greater enchantment, added mystery, for it has been and continues to be approached insatiably from every possible point of view. Contemplation of mirrors has reflected multiple themes and, simultaneously, as it is with mirrors, has been emptied yet left open to absorb more and more figurations and significations. More than once I have asked myself what is the point of writing on this over-written and thus overloaded theme. One thought I had when studying mirrors as media as well as technology is that many cultural and social practices are generated by physical reflection, projection, doubling, multiplying, transference and illumination (just to name a few), human activities that must be performed initially through the use of mirrors. And so, chiasmus – or the textual emulation of the criss-cross movement generated by mirrors – is the starring rhetorical figure not only in the "double narrative" so popular in western culture – as in the cases of Goethe and Eckerman, Poe and Baudelaire, Poe, Verne, Borges, Cortazar, Lacan and Derrida, for instance – but also in the cultural reproduction achieved through language. The Mirror, as presence, can be considered an intentional intervention into sight, gaze and figural production and reproduction. But, because "it is no longer there" – it has "disappeared" materially while remaining in its cognitive and practical realization – reflection, projection, doubling, multiplying, transferring and illuminating – mirroring

takes place seemingly without mediation between subjects, or by subject-created objects that induce multi-layered relationships.

This work is not intended to ponder mirrors – as if continuing the narcissistic gaze that prizes human capacities as technology-developing energy – nor is it intended to boycott mirrors from an absorbing critical attitude toward ocular centrism. Nor does it replicate what has already been written on these two attitudes in the literature on mirrors. Instead, it is meant to be a way of approaching mirrors from where they have disappeared, leaving only a trace, a clue of themselves. I perhaps do so because of the mirror's so-called instrumental and unimportant presence when compared to the so numerous important and appreciated human behaviors and thoughts aroused by it during its history in human existence. Studying mirrors is, then, a way to revise some of the mirror's impact on the fluctuating movement of presence/absence, in the traces it has created, those that have been converted into socio-cultural practices.

While the configuration of Mirror – as a concept – in painting has a long history,<sup>4</sup> opening my work with a reading of Magritte's painting is called for due to the place this painting has acquired lately in written texts on mirrors. *La Reproduction interdite: The Portrait of Edward James* has been chosen by several authors to close rhetorically, with an air of mystery, a variety of books and essays<sup>5</sup> whose subjects are linked to mirrors, to sight or visibility as a way of stressing paradox and enigma. That is, the painting itself – not only Mirror – has become a paradoxical figuration.

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance: Werness, H. (1999), *The Symbolism of Mirrors in Art from Ancient Times to the Present*. New York: Edwin Mellen; Galligan, G. (1998) The self pictured: Manet, the mirror, and the occupation of realist painting. *Art Bulletin*, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-54073921.html>; Harbison C. (2003) *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art*. New York: Prentice Hall.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of books and essays that finish by exposing *La Reproduction Interdit* as leaving open the question of mirror or sight: Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History* (translated by Katharine H. Jewett), New York/London: Routledge; Sobchack, V. (1992) *The Address of the Eye, A Phenomenology of Film Experience*, Princeton University Press.

To close a book with a mysterious visual representation is like closing a text with question marks or, alternatively, opening a new reading of what has just been said, or both. Thus, the image is what is needed in order to encrypt and decrypt by means of an "enigma machine",<sup>6</sup> something going beyond what can be said or what stands behind the enigmatic erasure of the intentional noise planted in order to derange decoding efforts.

I chose to open my reading on mirrors from the place where other readings have arrived at a certain closure, as if they had reached the portals of what mirrors seem to be, after attempting to read and write on mirrors as presences still mysterious and unfinished. But what most influenced my opening with a reading of *La Reproduction* was Sabine Melchior Bonnet's remark about painting reproduction, made almost without any explanation, on the last page of "*The Mirror: A History*". When closing the book, Melchior Bonnet comments as follows:

"...Too many mirrors? A beautiful painting by Rene Magritte entitled *La Reproduction Interdite* (1937) challenges the mirror's seemingly omnipotent power to turn every image into a cliché. A man, his back to the observer, stands before a mirror, in which he sees not his face but his back. Thus the subject demands the right to turn his back on mass reproduction, on easily consumed images, on the inquisition of on all-seeing society that assigns and enforces rigid identities. In short, he proclaims the right to hide his face and protect his secret. The more images and reflections there are, the more deeply

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<sup>6</sup> The Enigma machine: The German military used the Enigma ciphering machine during WWII to encrypt their communications. The machine was available commercially during the 1920s, but the military potential of the device was quickly realised and the German army, navy and air force all used a more developed model of the machine, believing that it would make their communications impenetrable to the enemy.

The Enigma machine is an electro-mechanical device that relies on a series of rotating 'wheels' or 'rotors' to scramble plaintext messages into incoherent ciphertext. The machine's variable elements can be set in billions of combinations, and each one will generate a completely different ciphertext message. If you know how the machine has been set up, you can type the ciphertext back in and it will unscramble the message. If you don't know the Enigma setting, the message remains indecipherable.

The German authorities believed in the absolute security of the Enigma. However, with the help of Polish mathematicians who had managed to acquire a machine prior to the outbreak of WWII, British code breakers stationed at Bletchley Park managed to exploit weaknesses in the machine and how it was used to crack the Enigma code. Breaking the Enigma ciphers gave the Allies a key advantage that, according to historians, shortened the war by two years, thus saving many lives. For a full history see: <http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/content/machines.rhtm>.

buried the secret will be. Such scrutiny only makes the invisible retreat further. The mirror will always remain haunted by what is not found within it..."

Melchior Bonnet's interpretation of a mirror's seemingly omnipotent power to turn every image into a cliché, representing the automatic repetitive reproduction of pre-constructed knowledge, is less obvious when we observe how cliché functions in literary theory. Structuralist and post structuralist approaches have suggested cliché as a verbal translation of stereotypes. In doing so they treat its intertextual nature as an ornament destined to generate textual atmosphere and desautomatization through the separation of literary from functional language. The characteristics of desautomatization genres, going from renovation and transcontextualization as generated by cliché's use in texts, has been the subject of numerous studies, among which Rifaterre's work is pioneering.<sup>7</sup> Still, it is worth looking once more into the relationship of *cliché*, an element historically used in the impression of texts, to text, printing and mirrors. Cultural reproduction, as embodied by physical text impression, is historically linked with Johann Gutenberg, who introduced efficient book production methods and initiated the process of massive text distribution. The fact that Gutenberg began his carrier as a metallurgist successful in the production of metal and then glass mirrors is a fact generally left unmentioned. This *uniapersonalia* or dual functioning of a subject once dealing with reflecting devices, in connection with a revolution in human history as important as the mechanization of text impression, attained through technologies of metal elaboration, is one of the thematic clusters that links cultural reproduction (texts, images and figures) with technology. Magritte alludes to as much by the painted mirrors and books in *La Reproduction*. Melchior Bonnet's verdict about the correlation between Mirror and cliché as reproducing banal significations should be countered with *cliché*'s literal

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<sup>7</sup> Rifaterre, M. (1971) *Essais de stylistique structurale*. Paris: Flammarion.

signification. Melchior Bonnet's *cliché* is attended by evaluative judgments coming from *clichér*, the French word used for typographic impressions (that is: *Etablir a l'aide d'un métal fusible, des planches reproduisant en relief l'empreinte d'une composition typographique*<sup>8</sup>) as representing "a phrase or idea which is used so often that it has become stale or meaningless".<sup>9</sup> Returning the word *cliché* to its original signification vis-à-vis its conversion into a banality provoked the transformation of "*La Reproduction Interdite*" into a trigger for the reconsideration of Mirror functions in reproduction(s) and reproduction technologies.

### **1. 1 Approaching the painting: A few methodological remarks**

Dividing unity, as Magritte says (2001: 614), is a philosophical problem that calls for dramatic intervention and an opening up to fictional possibilities of *mise en scène*.

For, as Edgar Allan Poe teaches us in *The Philosophy of Disposition* (1845),<sup>10</sup> the uniformity of the real is indivisible. A painting observed at first glance and according to the perspective chosen by the painter is an entrance into the scene she has planned as a scene including the viewer's presence. This scene includes a *for-da* wandering gaze as either an input or output of the angles offered for seeing the painting in the viewer's perspective and according to the viewer's focus.

I did not know where my reading of *La Reproduction* would lead me, other than supposing that this reading, one of the many that painters have used to relate to the

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<sup>8</sup> *Larousse Elementaire*. Paris, Librairie Larousse. P. 156

Translated by Micaela Kramer:

To establish plates which, with the aid of a metal fuse, reproduce the relief printing of a typographical composition

<sup>9</sup> *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Poe, E. A. (1845) *The Philosophy of Disposition*.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/poe/composition.html>.

range of thematic clusters linked to their mystery<sup>11</sup> when using the mirror figure, would help me pursue the study of mirrors as a techno-cultural device.

My journey into *La Reproduction* was inspired by a basic intuition. I have always felt that conceptually following the paradox of a mirrored figural representation reflecting the back instead the front of a man's body might make visible some possibilities for reentry into the study of mirrors precisely because considering the ways in which mirrors and their main functions—reflection, projection, doubling, multiplying, inverting, reversing, transporting, creating and recreating gestures and technologies – leads to Mirror's (de)constructive roles in cultural (re)production.

Instead of reducing forms to their visible limits, *La Reproduction's* anamorphic mirror, like that captured by Baltrusaitis (1976),<sup>12</sup> projects those forms outside themselves and distorts them so that only when viewed from certain points do they return to normal. It is in this way that the mirror reproduces "real" visibility: by transporting the image to a second plane where it acquires the reverse "capabilities" that transform its usual uses to those that reveal more than a mirror usually does. In

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<sup>11</sup> Painting with mirrors and painted mirrors has been and continues to be a recurrent practice and thematic cluster in the plastic and visual arts. The syntagmatic and paradigmatic study not only stresses the correlation between developments in the mirror industry, but also the inclusive characteristics these technological modifications have induced are correlated to manners and the weight the mirror carriers as an object constructing and de-constructing identity, subjectivity, objectivity, beauty, perspective, point of view and, of course, human characteristics. See: Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History*. (translated by Katharine H. Jewett) New York/London: Routledge; Pendergast, M. (2003) *Mirror, Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection*, New York: Basic Books (2003).; Roche, S. (1956) *Mirrors in Famous Galleries and Collections*. London: Gerald Duckworth (contains comparative examples with illustrations, and a history of mirrors from antiquity to the 20th century); Schiffer, H. F. (1983) *The Mirror Book: English, American and European*, Atglen, PA: Schiffer; Child, G. (1990). *World Mirrors, 1650-1900*. London: Sotheby's (on the emergence of mirrors and their development and use in society throughout history); Gregory, R. (1997) *Mirrors in Mind*, Oxford: W.H. Freeman (another multi-disciplinary discussion on the many uses and roles of mirrors; representation of the self in the mirror is brought up); Goldberg, B. (1985) *The Mirror and Man*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (on human interaction with mirrors); Gerson, R. (1989) *Ladies Compacts of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Des Moines, IA: Wallace-Homestead (many useful comparative illustrations; emphasis on connoisseurship and collecting); Gerson, R. (2001) *Vintage and Vogue Ladies' Compacts: Identification and Value Guide*, Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 2001 (good illustrations again); Edwards, J. (2000) *Miller's Powder Compacts: A Collector's Guide*, Turnhout, Belgium: Harvey Miller (more illustrations.)

<sup>12</sup> Baltrusaitis, J (1976) *Anamorphic Art*, Cambridge, UK: Chadwyck-Healey.

this way, the mirror's representative power, at first lost, reappears as an exigency leading to the creation of another point of view. The mirror that does not reverse sides – only directions – introduces a "surreal" quality, the obliteration of a retro – visor function. This type of mirror, parallel to a "normal mirror", and yet a third mirror that includes the first two as an intentional combination, composes and informs all three mirrors in the reproductive stance. The first, by showing the possible front view, also intimates the back and the passage of time; the second translates sides, languages, writers and translators; and the third refocuses our view by initially diffusing our past zoomed gazes. The third mirror, by creating another perspective, returns us to our initial position. By concentrating our vision in this way, the first mirror eternally reproduces the impossibility/possibility of viewing our entire selves by fracturing our possible gaze.

The mirror that reflects Edward James from his back is an accelerating mirror image that transforms viewing time, as if the mirror could reflect movement by impacting on the painting's interpretation – after all, it leaves part of the figure to be completed by imagination Time and Mirror in this case as well – as intercepted by Baltrusaitis (1976), who deals with the question of perspective, an issue exhibiting an historically ambivalent development. Perspective is a science that fixes the object's dimensions and positions quite precisely in space; but this same science also plays a part in the art of illusion that recreates those same positions.

*La Reproduction* reminds us of Holbein's *The Ambassadors* for, like the latter, it announces by means of a theatrical scenario that, contrary to *The Ambassadors*, is emptied of details: It does not reflect bodies of knowledge nor symbols of power; it does not create a theatrical space by means of the play of perspectives linked to the angles according to which the painting must be positioned because these angles and

games already exist inside the painting. The painting makes no differentiation between sky and ground and creates no luxurious ambience but, in a way, it does mark man as a passer by, reproducing himself ad infinitum in his passage, as if carrying a finitude within himself that repeats and reflects itself in the very motion of passing.

Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* lies on the shelf in the painting as an ornament as if to give the painting the referential glamour of a temporal situation. The shelf as either a marker or divider, separating up from down still bears a book, as in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, but this is not Luther's *Choral*; it is Poe's oeuvre, translated by Baudelaire, lying on that shelf. This book would be less illuminating were it to represent Magritte's spiritual preferences; yet, it would be more illuminating as an anamorphic image, positing the presence of the departed – Poe and Baudelaire – and at the same time the void created by their absence.

These three scenes, offered by at least three of the mirrors distinguishable in Magritte's painting, are approached in turn as I convert this painting into my research corpus. I therefore approach Mirror through Magritte's *La Reproduction* as if following a twofold movement. Along one swerve of the movement I decompose the painting into the aspects of the mirrors captured: the Mirror between the title and the painting; the Mirror of Translation and the Mirror of Remediation. Along the swerve, I trace the reflections these mirrors project to one another and reflect in each other as mediated by a variety of themes, including the relationship between image and text, the dual motif in addition to the activity and presence of the mirror technology in text, image and the space in between. The two approaches crisscross each other, with one amalgamating into the other's generalization and actualization.

*"The triptych technology of the mirror: Remediation and translation"* is an essay in the study of Mirror as a technology that participates in transformative processes of cultural reproduction. My assumption was that an intercultural and interdisciplinary re-vision of mirrors offers the possibility of going beyond considering Mirror's projections and reflections as something external to human beings. Instead, I attempt to view them as life technique(s) (Shirmacher, 2003), which implies movements such as duplication and multiplication, processes effectuating the ludic potentialities of seeing beyond what is thought of as a kind of feedback and to a way of better understanding the world.

Magritte's painting *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James* provides an opportunity for reconsidering Mirror functions and discussing their participation in cultural reproduction, a project undertaken in consultation with cultural, philosophical and literary texts (Derrida, Merleau Ponty, Ronell, Benjamin, Borges, Schirmacher, Nancy, Marion, Poe, Baudelaire, Lacan, Gallop et al.). The chosen processes, remediation and translation, are elaborated in the work's first four chapters. In fact, the *mirror triptych technology*, the figural innovation proposed by this work, results from localizing three figures – mise en abyme, chiasmus and metalepsis – in Magritte's painting to conform a machinery that provides virtuality instead of verosimilarity as a reproduction platform.

Reproduction through the mirror triptych technology is, then, intercepted as a continuous, destabilizing movement that actively participates in doubling and multiplying cultural utterances, simultaneously repeating sameness and difference but devoid of redundancy.

This theoretical elaboration has been applied to explore Mirror in Ideology, the theoretical problem that motivated much of the study of mirrors in this work.

While introducing Walsby and Walford's (1947; 1990) Systematic Ideology as representing the domain of Ideological Narratives, two approaches to the study of Ideology are called into play: Zizek's with respect to Ideologies and Derrida's regarding mirrors as seen in *The Specters of Marx* (1994). Mirror in Ideology, especially as represented by Systematic Ideology, has been localized as a technology for ideological narrative creation, reproduction and dissemination. In this sense this work, even if for the blink of an eye, presents an opportunity to glance at a particular technology – Mirror – at the moment its essence is disclosed, following Heidegger (1977) in "The Question Concerning Technology".

Through this study, Mirror is interpreted as a technology having transformative and reproductive functions while positioning it as one of the most pervasive of cultural practices. An epilogue, which traces the Mirror function in Ideology, posits a kind of corridor leading to further considerations, possibilities for rethinking what is as well as what has been banned.

In a way, studying mirrors through a painting is like adopting J. L. Marion's (2004) idea, according to which "phenomenology no longer pretends to return to the things itself, because it has undertaken the task of seeing what gives itself (*ce qui se donne*) – what gives (*ce que cela donne*)".<sup>13</sup> Approaching Mirror through a Magritte painting lets us discover mirrors in uncommon situations, positions and perspectives. These discoveries awaken the possibility of relating to them as aspects of a phenomenon whose visibility is represented in a paradoxical way; it attests to the visible while simultaneously opposing itself or, rather, inverting itself. As Marion puts it:

"...More than a surprising opinion, the paradox often points to a miracle—it makes visible that which one should not to be able to see and which one is not able to see without astonishment (*stupeur*)..." \*

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<sup>13</sup> Marion, J. L. (2004) *The Crossing of the Visible* (Translated by James K.A. Smith), Stanford: Stanford University Press; Nancy, J. L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Translated by Jeff Fort), New York: Fordham University Press.

Opposing mimetic attitudes toward art, Marion states that a painting imposes before every gaze an absolutely new phenomenon, thereby increasing the quantity of the visible. The painting—but only if it is authentic—exposes an absolutely original phenomenon without preconditions or genealogy, an event suddenly appearing with such violence that it explodes the limits of the visible identified up to that point. The painter completes the world precisely because he makes no attempt to imitate nature (Marion, 2004).<sup>14</sup>

While reading and studying Magritte's *La Reproduction*, I began to think that all the world's mirrors are captured in the mirrors appearing in the painting; at the same time, it also became clear to me that this painting makes a singular contribution to "all that gives itself as all the mirrors of the world". I therefore offer some glances on the appearance of mirrors in culture as a kind of introductory corridor, prior to proceeding on to my reading of Magritte's *La Reproduction*.

## **1. 2 Some glances on some Mirror gazes**

Melchior Bonnet (2002) and Pendergrast (2003) have lately inscribed a multifaceted history of mirrors, ranging from Narcissus' tale to Lacan's mirror stage. The first stresses technological influences in mirror-making as affecting and being affected by the way women and men saw and see themselves as human beings; the second relates to the mirror's invention, refinement and use as they are echoed on myth, religion, science, manners and the arts.<sup>15</sup>

A summary of glances over mirror traces in history is intended to introduce a kind of protocol to approaching Mirror itself and then to keep track of Magritte's lecture about

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History* (translated by Katharine H. Jewett), New York/London: Routledge.

Mirror's participation in a pivotal cultural practice, specifically, cultural reproduction.

The mirror's function as a cultural reproductive device is therefore blurred.

Recognizing the origins of the resemblance between thoughts, events and people appears to be one of the main practices of cultural creation and its enveloping critique.

This practice continues while its originating medium and the technology recede, in the best case to the background and in the worst case to a destiny of instrumentality and oblivion, not to mention withdrawal into negative repute.

This is why, when I refer to the stances adopted by Mirror as a cultural device, Heidegger's "question concerning technology" – which was, for him, not a question of technology per se but, rather, what he calls "the essence (*Wesen*) of technology,...by no means anything technological" – discloses, in my view, the non-technological meaning of Mirror as a technology. From this perspective, my analysis of Mirror illustrates a specific case inspired by Heidegger's general view on technology.

According to Heidegger, this non-technological "essence" of technology has been obscured by the common consensual definition of technology as utilitarian, as a means to an end. This definition "blinds us" to the other, broader "essence" that informs not only the modern view of technology but also the quite different conceptions held of traditional technology and the *techne* of ancient Greece.

In the case of Mirror, similar to Heidegger's views on technology, as we will see, the "second concealment" does nothing more than conceal the first concealment.

Duplication or multiplication, when dealing with Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" as applied to the mirror as technological output, are taken for granted; their existence and meaning are presupposed rather than considered outputs of the movement of precensing:

"...The coming to presence of Enframing is the danger. As the danger, Being turns about into the oblivion of its coming to presence, turns away from this

coming to presence, and in that way simultaneously turns counter to the truth of its coming to presence. In the danger there holds sway this turning about not yet thought on..."<sup>16</sup>

In a way, this essay, by trial and error, will attempt to intercept the mirror function in cultural reproduction. It will do so while adopting Heidegger's dual concealment as related to mirror as technicity and trying to find a passage from the said second concealment back to the first. The unconcealing of the concealment of concealment is none other than *Gelassenheit*. Releasement allows us to see Being as sending while living with technicity.

Magritte's "tri-dimensional as one mirror" returns Mirror's presence to the forefront of the scene. Magritte does so not only by referring to the mirror as a cultural motif but also as a technological device for remediating culture and technology. Through a theory and a methodology that un-conceal specific technologies as media that not only impact on the transmission of messages in terms of the recipient, they also impact on the "how", "what" and "who" of the transmission, factors that allow a reading of Heidegger's question on technology in terms of McLuhan's "the Medium is the message", that is, through techno-cultural signs and signals that figure and perform the incessant realization of human potentialities. Thus, Magritte's tri-dimensional mysterious painted mirror, as a proposal for the mirrors' figural polyphony, offers the possibility of studying Mirror again from yet another vantage point.

In a time and context where the hegemony of Modernism continues to prize originality, novelty and uniqueness in detachment from the polyphonic, and when the sometimes contradictory or ambivalent traces found in culture are neglected in favor of univocal significations, it is worth observing cultural reproduction's traces,

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<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, M. (1977), in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (translated by William Lovitt), New York: Harper and Row, p. 36.

especially the mirror, one of the technologies that has participated and continues to participate in trace-making, in developing a huge industry of allegorical significations. "Falling into the mirror trap" led to the one of the most common examples of attitudes toward the study of Mirror. Mirror according to Rorty, has been considered as a device mediating between Philosophy and Nature. And, following the Platonic tradition as Abrams discloses in his *Mirror and the Lamp*, mirrors also mediate between Literature (and other arts' representations) and Nature but, as suggested by Baudelaire, perhaps not less than between Culture and Nature. According to this tradition, mirrors translate and naturalize ways of understanding the world, from field to field or from category to category, causing the identification of media together with bodies of knowledge as ways of being in the world.

This is how Rorty's critical work on philosophy deconstructs the traditional metaphor of Mind as Mirror. His method divides the history of philosophy into two parts. The first part, covering the period from Plato to Peirce, includes all those who think of consciousness as a detached mirror that collects private copies of nature. The second, includes the group that sweeps Nature away: Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Dewey, among others. Rorty's study demarcates limits for only one metaphor while calling for an innovative way of thinking through a new set of metaphors. Very little has been done to articulate the next dominant metaphor to overcome the mirror. Yet, these alternatives are already present in the very tradition Rorty used to overcome the original mirror metaphor, namely, classic American philosophy, most notably James and Whitehead, but especially Peirce, who Rorty dismisses as a Cartesian and attached to Mirror as mediating or reflecting nature. On the contrary, it was Peirce who marked the way toward a distinct set of metaphors that develop a specifically

anti-Cartesian, anti-foundationalist and semiotic conception of mind and world as "fluid."<sup>17</sup>

Abrams' work *The Mirror and the Lamp* points out the crucial change in figures of Mind – from Mind as a "mirror" of outside reality to Mind as a "lamp" or a "fountain" that determines what it knows. Abrams identifies Mind with the mimetic tradition "impersonated" by Plato's reflector, while Plotinus's work represents the archetype of the projector. He considers the shift in emphasis from the former to the latter as *the* decisive event in the Romantic theory of knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

Mirror as a *prothèse* that does not see autonomously but is mostly enlisted to allegorically deal with the mirror's supposed uses and abuses has been epistemologically treated according to what is associated with its role in entire philosophical theories.

The epistemological line adopted in this work considers mirrors and mirroring as a technology. Taken from this point of view, we can assume that Heidegger's attitude to technology is also relevant to mirrors, linked as it is to his attitude toward all relationships with things as objects that are there *for us*, meaning a kind of openness to Being itself. The openness to Being that Heidegger calls for stand before us, always present and available for study or use; so, we cannot just attempt to discern what things are, that is, their manifold qualities and properties, which are apparently given and presented as such to our mind. Rather, such openness entails attending to *how* things are, to their way of Being, their self-disclosing and self-concealing, their coming into and withdrawing from presence, which in itself is never straightforwardly *present* for us to observe.

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<sup>17</sup> Abrams, J.J (2002) Philosophy After the Mirror of Nature: Rorty, Dewey, and Peirce on Pragmatism and Metaphor, *Metaphor and Symbol*, 17, 227-242.

<sup>18</sup> . Abrams, M.H. (1971) *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. London/ New York: Oxford University Press.

In his lecture on *Gelassenheit*, Heidegger (1955) states that it is impossible for humanity simply to deny or escape from the technological character of the modern world; however, it is possible to prevent ourselves from becoming slaves to the machines and devices which we utilize. We can do so, he argues, by learning to say both "yes" and "no" to the objects and instruments of technology at one and the same time, that is, by using them as they are intended to be used but also by learning to "let go" and "leave them to themselves" as things that "do not concern us in our innermost and authentic being". It soon becomes clear that for Heidegger, this new way of relating to things, this letting things be, is inseparably bound up with an openness to what the object is not, to what Heidegger calls its "mystery" or *Geheimnis*.

Heidegger proposed that the direction to be taken by the era of modern technology is not completely known, that it contains hidden orientations, hidden from view. This direction is our destiny, yet we can never fully grasp what it is, we can never "place it before ourselves". The modern world's non-objectifiable orientation remains a mystery. A non-technical *gelassen* relation to the things lying among us is achieved, according to Heidegger, only through a thoughtful openness to the imminent mystery of things, to what is not a present object for us; by mastering subjectivity, we are able to leave things to themselves, to let them be.

Mirror as a technology has had a long history; it projects itself toward the *a venir* in multiple ways. This movement, which Magritte presents as mystery, is the place from where I begin this journey from and toward Mirror's way of being.

In his introduction to *Mirror, Mirror: A History of Human Love Affair to Reflection*,

Mark Pendergrast (2003)<sup>19</sup> states that "all the mirrors of the world" expose the multilayered expansion of Mirror in human life. Obviating those mirrors that were not made to be looked into but to reflect and transmit, he relates to the remaining mirrors as containing the history of looking, adding that what we perceive in these magical surfaces can tell us a great deal about ourselves. The mirror, Pendergrast concludes, appears throughout the human drama as a means of self-knowledge and self-delusion. The mirror functions as an instrument of self-knowledge; it enfolds many ways of looking at oneself: with fear, modesty, joy, complacency, or defiance. One can look for resemblances and differences, kinship or foreignness. The mirror image can be remarkably accurate but it can also be distorted and imperfect. Persons from of the eighteenth century, by then familiar with household mirrors, did not look at themselves in the same manner as persons from the twelfth century did; for the latter, the reflected image went hand in hand with the work of the devil. More profoundly, the representation of self depends on a complex idea of humankind, as both being and appearing (Melchior Bonnet, 2002).<sup>20</sup>

Foucault (1986)<sup>21</sup> considers the mirror a place of mixed, joint experience, of utopia (as a non-space) and heterotopia (as a counter-space). Alluding to this chiasmic criss-cross, Foucault conjures that in every culture, in every civilization, there are real/unreal places that do exist, having been formed during the very founding of society. These are counter-sites, an effectively enacted utopia in which real sites – that is, all the other real sites that can be found in a culture – are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted:

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<sup>19</sup> Pendergast, M. (2003) *Mirror, Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* , New York: Basic Books (2003).

<sup>20</sup> Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History* (translated by Katharine H. Jewett), New York/London: Routledge.

<sup>21</sup> Foucault, M. (1986), Text/Context of Other Spaces (translated by J. Miskowiec), *Diacritics* 16(1), 22-27.

"...The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there, where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also the heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: It makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there..."<sup>22</sup>

As Merleau-Ponty notes, "every technique is a 'technique of the body;'" the mirror "outlines and amplifies the metaphysical structure of our flesh" (1964: 33).<sup>23</sup> Hence, the most familiar technique of the visible body, of this enigmatic seeing-being seen, is the mirror. Almost as a confirmation of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of sight in the mirror, it has been discovered that mirrors exist not only as physical objects – that is, humanly constructed mirrors – but that mirrors are part of the human (animal) body, as demonstrated by the mirror neurons discovered by Rizzolatti et al. in 1997 in Parma (Ramachandran, 2000).<sup>24</sup> Mirror neurons are specific cells that ignite when we (animals) perform an action, such as pulling or pushing something. Different neurons ignite for different actions, tempting us to believe that they are a type of motor neuron. However, these neurons also ignite when we see others perform a task, even if we are at rest. This phenomenon is, most likely, what enables us to foresee, read or even understand others' intentions and actions (Ramachandran, 2000).

Going back to Linnaeus, quoted by Agamben (2004) as having a "weakness for apes", he defined *homo* as the animal that *is* only if it recognizes that which *is not* [italics in the original].<sup>25</sup> This situates Linnaeus' optical "machine" very close to the important

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<sup>22</sup> Foucault, M. (1986). Text/Context of other spaces (J. Miskowiec, Trans.) *Diacritics* 16(1), 22-27.

<sup>23</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964) *The Primacy of Perception*, James M. Edie (Ed.), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Ramachandran, V.S. (2000). *Mirror neurons and imitation learning as the driving force behind "the great leap forward" in human evolution*, [http://www.edge.org/3rd\\_culture/ramachandran/ramachandran\\_p1.html](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/ramachandran/ramachandran_p1.html).

findings about the human (animal) brain as containing mirror neurons that ignite not only when an imitation is performed but also when humans recognize themselves in the performances of others.<sup>25</sup> The recognition of ourselves in others or others in ourselves is, then, the founding moment of any performance, an action defined by Butler (1990) as embodying social fictions of the "natural" basic inclination to become ourselves through the reproduction of others.<sup>26</sup>

The being and appearing captured in the criss-cross play is imposed by a subject looking at himself and at the other in a mirror, as if his gaze was elaborated at the same time as relations of the soul to the body developed. This event congealed when the individual became defined on the basis of his ties to God, to the Other and to himself. As long as the body was excluded from the subjective, true self, the mirror returned only a mere semblance, open to manipulation and to lies. However, this semblance, in its continuity, is what proves to man that he really exists today just as he did the day before (Melchior Bonnet, 2002). The terrifying image of the man who cannot see himself in the mirror, sketched in Maupassant's story *Le Horla*, is, perhaps, the story of disappearance that, not less than the first encounter with appearance, causes mystery and anguish. The horror of not being capable of recognizing the true self is, then, a not less terrifying experience than discovering someone unknown (myself as the other) in the mirror at the generative moment of mutual discovery: In the self and the other during the first scene of their long reflective adventure.

Humans have used the reflective surface both to reveal and to hide reality; and so, mirrors have found their way into religion, folklore, literature, art, magic and science.

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<sup>25</sup> Agamben, G. (2002) *The Open: Man and Animal* (Translated by Kevin Attel) Werner Hamache (Ed.), Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Butler, Judith (1990) Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory, In: Sue-Ellen Case (Ed.), *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The ancients – Egyptians, Indians, Chinese, Mayans, Incas and Aztecs – buried their dead with magical metal or stone reflectors, meant to protect the soul, ward off evil spirits, or allow the body, before taking its final trip to the afterlife, to correct its hairdo.

The mirror's features linked it with the Sun God. In parallel, it was used to apply cosmetics, foreshadowing thousands of years of people peering into the "flattering glass". Nevertheless, scryers conserved the magic of mirrors and used them to look into the mystic future during the Middle Ages; in this way, mirrors served as a portal to the divine or to the demonic. Magicians would manipulate them to create illusions to impress kings and commoners.

Pendergrast reminds us that mirrors often combined scientific with bellic applications. According to legend, Archimedes used mirrors to set fire to Roman ships during the siege of Syracuse; the controversy over whether this feat was possible led to modern solar ovens and generators. Concave mirrors made early lighthouses possible, whereas the reflecting telescope changed our view of the universe. Today, huge mirrors permit us to peer back through time, to billions of years ago, into the most distant regions of space; lightweight gossamer optics will allow us to look back even farther. Some envision using giant, orbiting mirrors to manage the earth's climate. Pendergrast<sup>27</sup> identifies the story of mirrors with the story of light, contrary to what Abrams<sup>28</sup> has classified as two opposing paradigms in Literature: The Mirror and the Lamp characterize light as a mysterious medium that acts like a wave and a particle simultaneously; it imposes speed limits on the universe and is, according to Albert Einstein, the universe itself. The ability to explore the universe increased when

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<sup>27</sup>Pendergrast, M. (2003) *Mirror, Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection*, New York: Basic Books (2003).

<sup>28</sup> Abrams, M.H. (1971) *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. London/ New York: Oxford University Press.

mirrors began to be used after World War II to reflect negative wavelengths, thus adding another segment to the mirror saga.

The glass mirror industry, since its establishment in the Middle Ages as a secret Italian guild, followed by the seventeenth-century French industrial espionage that broke the monopoly, has grown to huge proportions. The common glass mirror also had an unforeseen and revolutionary impact on Renaissance literature and art, rendering them more realistic, secular and erotic.

The mirror's status has also accompanied class mobility, becoming a symbol of aristocratic luxury, a means of maintaining appearances beyond immediate time. Situated "in the crossroad of nature and culture, it educated the eye and assisted in relaying lessons on civility" (Melchior Bonnet, 2002). Melchior Bonnet's history traces the function of mirrors not only as educating a taste for ornament and attention to social display and hierarchy, but also a new geography of the body, making visible previously unfamiliar images (one's back and profile) while concurrently stirring sensations of modesty and self-consciousness.

Pendergrast reminds us that mirrors have been used by architects and home decorators; in the twentieth century, glittering mirrors helped transform the United States into a pleasure-seeking, vain, celebrity-driven society. Psychologists, advertisers, police and voyeurs began to peer at us through one-way mirrors. Mirrors helped usher in the earliest human civilizations; they now point into the future while allowing astronomers to peer ever farther back into the past (Melchior-Bonnet, 2002).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Pendergast, M. (2003) *Mirror, Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection*, New York: Basic Books (2003); Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History*. (translated by Katharine H. Jewett) New York/ London: Routledge.

<sup>29</sup>Eco, U. (1988). "De los espejos". *De los espejos y otros ensayos*. Barcelona: Lumen, p. 11.

Considered from an internal stance "within" a mirror, our incapacity to discern whether the mirror is a sign or an object is the outcome of the two cognitions being, in Eco's (2000)<sup>30</sup> view, linked by an eternal, circular relationship. Eco (2000)<sup>31</sup> stresses the communicative or mediating function of the mirror while assuming that we confide in mirrors as if they were reality itself. Instead of being a type of sign, the mirror is treated as a peculiar kind of prosthesis, that is, something that extends the range of action of our body. Indeed, the mirror is not a *substitutive prosthesis* but an *extensive* one; it does not substitute for a bodily organ but adds to it. Moreover, Eco states, as a prosthesis, the mirror is *intrusive*: It permits us to see things that we are unable to experience with our naked eyes, similar to the "third eye" situated on the tip of the index finger.

What makes the mirror unique, even in its prosthetic function, is that it cannot deceive us as might an ordinary channel that permits information to flow. According to Eco, identification of the mirror with a channel enables us to eliminate the specular images assumed to be symptomatic of the presence hidden inside a mirror. Nevertheless, he continues, every functioning channel is a symptom of the existence of some source emitting a signal. The mirror, when viewed as a symptom, tells us something about itself and the possible uses we can make of it but nothing about the specular image it reflects. In this context, we can maintain that despite the channel function, only two possible figures can classify Eco's mirror as a channel. One is the mirror as a channel for carrying messages, including all messages pertaining to the advancing past and its future traces; the second is the mirror as a channel of contexts that intensifies its singular and universal characteristics (for the latter, see Irigaray's elaboration of the speculum, Silverman's cinematic acoustic mirror, Abrams's literary mirror, Rorty's

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*Philosophy as the Mirror of Nature* and, of course, the mirrors that define contextually by their daily uses.<sup>32</sup> As channels-prosthesis, mirrors – like every prosthesis – induce perceptual illusions; alternatively, they are used to make other things signify what function the respective mirror fulfills. The two cases of mirrors, according to Eco, refer to a semiotics of "*mise en scene*" and not to the thing itself.

At the threshold of perception and signification, Eco situates the specular image as *the* exemplary case of duality despite its exhibition of characteristics of singularity: The latter quality explains the virtual duplication of stimuli. These stimuli function as if duplicating the body as object even though the body is subject, unfolding while remaining before – as an entrance to – itself. The specular experience, a robbery of images, contributes to the dream of the *absolute icon*. This is why, according to Eco, humans draw without a mirror only what the mirror allows, even though the more "realist" of those paintings do not exhibit all the mirrored characteristics. The mirror's limitations therefore transform the painting into a threshold phenomenon. For example, if obscurity, smoke or the presence of opaque objects act as "noise" in the channel of sensorial perception and demand interpretative efforts in order to arrive at the precise form of perception, then mirrors impose semiotic processes on the viewer. But mirrors are not signs, Eco adverts. He bases this axiom on the following premises regarding Mirror:

1. The specular image is present before a referent that must be present somewhere.
2. The image is causally produced by the object.

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<sup>32</sup> Irigaray, L. (1985) *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Translated by Gillian Gill), Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; Silverman, K. (1988) *The Acoustic Mirror: Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Benington and Indianapolis, Indianapolis University Press; Rorty, R. (1979) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

3. The mirror cannot be used to lie. It is possible to lie with and around specular images but it is impossible to lie with or through a mirror.
4. It is impossible to create a direct correlation between a specular image and a content because it is through its primary relationship with a transitive referent that the specular image is linked to a content.
5. The specular image is not independent of the medium or the channel that forms and transmits it. The specular image creates a complete and exclusive channel: the mirror.
6. The specular image is not directly interpretable. It is interpretable only through different kinds of inferences, definitions more analytically descriptive than the object which it remits, otherwise understood as the stimuli field that it duplicates.

When clarifying the formative function of the mirror, Eco refers to two kinds of results that further our understanding of Mirror as a threshold phenomenon. One of these results refers to the deformed figure; the other to catoptric theaters. The deformed figure installs itself, according to Eco, between the specular and the semiotic. The deformed figure is parasitical with respect to its referents. Yet, it approaches the semiotic because using such figures broadens interpretation, the possibility of knowing better, absent from, for instance, television or cinematography. This possibility is always there: One can approach or step back from the mirror in order to see more or less, movements that are physically impossible in front of a TV set or a movie screen. In these cases, the viewer's perceptive surprise transforms channeling, as a feature, into an anomaly. This is why Eco concludes that the semiotic effort (re)produces itself between perceptive surprise and the channel, not between the image and the object.

In Eco's view, the second result, catoptric theater, is of three kinds. The first changes *virtual* objects by placing their images into a scene that the observer realizes is constructed by mirrors. The second is created by combining the interplay of mirrors put on stage; the use of different kinds of curved mirrors creates real images that the observer has to consider in a prodigious effect of perception. The third type of catoptric theater is created by flat mirrors disposed in a way that various object images are created by superposition, juxtaposition or amalgamation in order to convince the ignorant observer that she is in the presence of prodigious apparitions. In the first case, the mirror's presence is clear while in the second and third case, it is obscure, with the observer unaware of its presence. The mirror as a channel is present in any case: In the first case, by offering the possibility of enjoying not only what is reflected but how it is reflected while in the second and third case, *jouissance* is attained by effects interpreted as reality. Apuleius,<sup>33</sup> like Eco, enjoyed mirrors; the *éloge* of the mirror in his *Apologia* remounts and projects in time the answered questions Mirror has aroused. This was accomplished not only by converting the mirror into one of the most crucial techno-cultural devices in the invaginated space (Derrida, 1987)<sup>34</sup> of cultural production and reproduction, but also as an invaginated space per se, by continually absorbing new and renewed occurrences.

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<sup>33</sup>Lucius Apuleius was born around 124 AD in Madauros, a Roman colony in the south of Numidia, an area now located near modern Mdaourouch in Algeria; he died some time after 180 AD in or around Carthage. Apuleius is best remembered for his brilliant novel, the **Metamorphoses**, also known as **The Golden Ass**. He is the author of **Florida** and of three philosophical treatises, entitled **De Plato**, **De Socrates**, and **De Mundi**. In addition, a great deal of recent scholarship has paid close attention to another of his works, **Apologia (Defense)**, a unique document in the Latin classics. It is a piece of linguistic virtuosity, thought to have been orally delivered by Apuleius in his own defense in front of pro-consul Claudius Maximus and a court of Roman magistrates convened in Sabratha, a North African city not far from Tripoli. He stood accused of sorcery, an offense punishable by death under Roman law enacted in the first century. For more details see: <http://www.tazzla.org/apuleius.htm>. See also: Apuleius, L. (1909) *Apologia*, (translated by H.E. Butler), <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/apuleius/transold.html>.

<sup>34</sup>Derrida, J. (1987). *Psyché: Invention de l'autre*. Collection "La Philosophie en effet", Paris: Galilée.

Accused of possessing a mirror for magical purposes, Apuleius was one of the few philosophers who openly and joyfully celebrated mirrors, who openly admitted to his *jouissance* of these mechanisms. To Apuleius, the first justification for mirror possession, for its use-derived joy, emanates from the possibility of man carrying his own likeness about. As he declared: “There is nothing more pleasing for a man to look upon than his own image” (“...*nihil esse aspectabilius homini nato quam formam suam?* ...). Could this joy be related to man's own recognition of his humanity as conceptualized by Agamben's interpretation of Linnaeus's optical machine? Meaning: "*Homo* is constitutively an 'anthropomorphous' animal – that is, resembling man, according to the term that Linnaeus used consistently until the *Systema*'s tenth edition – who must recognize himself in the non-man in order to be human" (Agamben, *The Open*, p. 17).<sup>35</sup> Joy could then be linked to recognizing the distinctiveness of humans among other animals and the subsequent self-recognition of the singularity of each man among men.

Obviously, Apuleius' descriptions of the joy man felt from seeing himself represents a sort of slow-motion picture on the Mirror Stage. Its projection stops at the first moment of this stage, as characterized by Lacan in his description of the moment of narcissistic identification. According to Lacan (Sobchack, 1992),<sup>36</sup> this narcissism initially springs from the infant's “jubilant assumption of the specular image...in which the ‘I’ is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other.” In contrast to the *étrangement* that marks acquisition – through the mirror – of the recognition of ourselves as others, an insight that, according to Lacan, follows narcissistic identification, Apuleius stresses the

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<sup>35</sup> Agamben, G. (2004) *The Open, Man and Animal* (translated by Kevin Attell), Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>36</sup> Sobchack, V. (1992) *The Address of the Eye, A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 110.

quest for likeness or the joy of finding ourselves *in* others; he affirms a commonplace – “Fathers love those sons most who most resemble themselves” (*Equidem scio et filiorum cariores esse qui similes uidentur*). Alternatively, when slowly widening the sphere of his own argumentation, Apuleius asks:

“...What else is the significance of statues and portraits produced by the various arts? You will scarcely maintain the paradox that what is worthy of admiration when produced by art is blameworthy when produced by nature; for nature has an even greater facility and truth than art.

Long labor is expended over all the portraits wrought by the hand of man, yet they never attain to such truth as is revealed by a mirror. Clay is lacking in life, marble in color, painting in solidity, and all three in motion, which is the most convincing element in a likeness: whereas in a mirror the reflection of the image is marvelous, for it is not only like its original, but moves and follows every nod of the man to whom it belongs; its age always corresponds to that of those who look into the mirror, from their earliest childhood to their expiring age: it puts on all the changes brought by the advance of years, shares all the varying habits of the body, and imitates the shifting expressions of joy and sorrow that may be seen on the face of one and the same man. For all we mould in clay or cast in bronze or carve in stone or tint with encaustic pigments or color with paint, in a word, every attempt at artistic representation by the hand of man after a brief lapse of time loses in truth and becomes motionless and impassive like the face of a corpse. So far superior to all pictorial art in respect of truthful representation is that craft's manly smoothness and productive splendor of the mirror...”.<sup>37</sup>

Apuleius celebrated the living and the seeing body as reflected in the mirror:

reflected, but not caught, neither momentarily paralyzed nor petrified. Apuleius views Plato's mirror as simulacra and Seneca's mirror as vanity. Mirror could be efficient in resembling and in creating (*opifex*) (Melchior Bonnet, 2002).<sup>38</sup> The perhaps less technologically aware Apuleius nevertheless mentioned the possibility of combining image and movement in one imagining by means of the mirror, a highly developed technology for his day, comparable to the film or television camera. In a sense,

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<sup>37</sup> Apuleius, L. *Apologia* (1909) (translation by H.E. Butler), <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/apuleius/transold.html>

<sup>38</sup> Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History* (translated by Katharine H. Jewett) New York/ London: Routledge, p. 107-108.

Apuleius pre-described Visibility in its characterization by Merleau Ponty as *flesh*, which is the Sensible in itself. His activity within it is:

"...equally passivity—which is the second and more profound sense of narcissism: not to see in the outside, as the other sees it, the contour of a body one inhabits, but especially been seen by the outside, to exist within it, to emigrate into it, to be seduced, captivated, alienated by the phantom, so that the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know who sees and which is seen..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).<sup>39</sup>

As if evading the nature of the material, Apuleius proposes two alternative possibilities for relating to self–appearance. In the first, modeled after Lacedaemonian Agesilaus, who had no confidence about his personal appearance – and as Buisine alludes to Sartre – ugliness is captured in both Agesilaus's and Sartre's attitudes toward Mirror.<sup>40</sup> Lacedaemonian Agesilaus refused to allow his portrait to be painted or carved, or to join those who welcomed portraiture in the media of sculpture and painting. In the latter case, Apuleius asks whether there is any reason to prefer seeing one's portrait molded in marble rather than reflected in silver, in a painting rather than in a mirror? The answer to this question is not so obvious for the "portrait" and the "self-portrait" have been two of the most celebrated motifs in the long itinerary of human iconic and textual self representation, under iconoclastic and deicidal intentionalities. Comparing a mirror image to a portrait implies a reference to the temporality in representation as well as the representation of temporality. This reference is what is or was represented in a portrait as in the mirror, that is, a temporary appearance and disappearance, testifying to what is *really* staring out from either a mirror or a canvas. Derrida, while referring to blindness in portraiture and as a theme in drawing, states that blindness pierces right through to the memory of a trait:

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<sup>39</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968) *The Visible and the Invisible* (translated by Alphonso Lingus), Claude Lefort, (Ed.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

<sup>40</sup> Jay, M. (1993) Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and the Search for a New Ontology of Sight in: David Michael Levin (Ed.) *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press. pp. 143-155.

"...The subtitle of all these scenes of the blind is thus: *the origins of drawing* Or, if you prefer, *the thought of drawing*, a certain pensive pose, *a memory of the trait* that speculates as in a dream, about its own possibility. Its potency always develops on the brink of blindness. Blindness pierces through right at that point and thereby gains *in potential*, in potency: the angle of a sight that is threatened or promised, lost *or* restored, given. There in this gift a sort of *re-drawing*, a *with-drawing*, a *retreat (re-trait)*, at once the interposition of a mirror, an impossible reappropriation or mourning, the intervention of a paradoxical Narcissus, sometimes lost en abyme, in short a specular *fold* or *falling back* (repli) and a supplementary *trait*..." (Derrida, 1992: 3).<sup>41</sup>

The close conceptual parentage of the portrait and the mirror is found first in Apuleius' *Apologia*; later, more intimated than explicated by David Hockney (2001) in his theory of optics and art, developed by studying the art of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The comparison of the vivacity, actuality and immediacy of a moving image in the mirror, in contrast to the paralyzed and petrified images in stone, iron or canvas, is considered by Apuleius as an instrument of moral discipline, self-training and education.

Mirror is a device capable of reflecting gestures, un-concealing the comparison between inside and outside, morality and immorality, good and bad rhetoric and the art of argumentation. Socrates demanded that his followers compare their appearance with their soul in the light; Demosthenes, the greatest master of the art of public speaking, always practiced pleading before a mirror as though before a professor of rhetoric; Plato the philosopher learned all that could be learned of argumentation from the dialectician Eubulides, who betook himself to a mirror to perfect delivery. These exemplars were resurrected by Apuleius in order to demonstrate why use of a mirror is one of the recommended techniques for philosophical research and reflective thinking.

Apuleius also stated that a philosopher should look into a mirror because one of his duties is to study likeness, causality and modality. In contrast, Epicurus, Plato,

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<sup>41</sup> Derrida, J. (1992) *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas), Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Archytas and the Stoics discussed the relationship between sight and mediation and between the seeing subject and the seen object. Although proposing different answers to different crucial questions, all agreed that when emanations from an object strike any dense, smooth, and shiny surface, they return to the surface from which they emanated in such manner that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection. Like Magritte, Eco, Pendergrast and Melchior Bonnet, Apuleius points beyond the polyphony conjured by words. *Mirror* is the word used to represent reflection, but reflections are variegated; hence, *reflection* and *reflexibility* have no unique signification; instead, each carries its own geneology and history. For instance, in flat mirrors, all the images and objects reflected are shown most precisely, in their original dimensions, whereas in convex and spherical mirrors, everything is seen smaller than in nature while in concave mirrors, everything is seen larger than in nature. Not only does Apuleius treat signification of reflection in the plural, he also calls the signification of reversal, causality and intentionality (with or without mirrors) into question:

"...Why again and under what circumstances are left and right reversed? When does one and the same mirror seem now to withdraw the image into its depths, now to extrude it forth to view? Why do concave mirrors when held at right angles to the rays of the sun kindle tinder set opposite them? What is the cause of the prismatic colors of the rainbow, or of the appearance in heaven of two rival images of the sun, with sundry other phenomena treated in a monumental volume by Archimedes of Syracuse, a man who showed extraordinary and unique subtlety in all branches of geometry, but was perhaps particularly remarkable for his frequent and attentive inspection of mirrors..." (Apuleius, 2001).<sup>42</sup>

Despite the scientific modality of Apuleius' style, meant to diagnose questions, his *Mirrors' Apologia* celebrates imitation, similitude, semblance, narcissism as well as a

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<sup>42</sup> Apuleius, L. (2001) *Apuleius Rethorical Works*. Translated by S.J Harrison; J.L . Hilton & V. Hunick. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

variety of the mirror's uses and possibilities, qualities considered inferior to originality, geniality, modesty and uniqueness during some epochs of western history. Apuleius's *Apologia* could not prevent Mirror, *qua* reflector, from acquiring a bad reputation on the basis of Plato's critique of art. Yet, Apuleius argued that through Mirror's mediating function, imitation installs itself before Nature. The same function induces imitation – i.e., reflection – an unsolvable and sometimes idealistic longing for the object itself.

Abrams, in his *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1971: 10-11),<sup>43</sup> reminds us that in the tenth book of the *Republic*, Socrates compares the artisan, the maker of an actual object, with an artist, stating that it is quicker and easier to reproduce objects through mirrors. He goes on to define as the results of the artist's – rather than that of the artisan's – labor. Plato, Abrams adds, goes on to derive several unflattering consequences from the character and value of art, stressing that this illustration is not a crucial in his writings. Plato repeatedly refers to the analogy of the reflector, whether a mirror, water, or any less perfect simulacra of things that we call *shadows*. He clearly announces the inferiority of art vis-a-vis Nature and the material "real" world. Moreover, Plato explicitly differentiation between real things and their reflections, with reflections not only named but characterized as shadows, meaning a less genuine version of reality or its mere imitation.

According to Abrams (1971), the long survival of the reflector as an archetype into the sixteenth and seventeenth century demonstrates its aptness and suggestiveness as one fulcrum for aesthetic theory. Abraham treats modern criticism as the search for alternative parallels, a search that would avoid some of the troublesome implications

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<sup>43</sup> Abrams, M.H. (1971) *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. London/ New York: Oxford University Press.

of Mirror and improve comprehension of those aspects of an aesthetic object left marginal or omitted by an archetype. Enlightenment and light, the overflow from a fountain, the music of a harp; all embody metaphors describing the relationship between art and nature.<sup>44</sup>

Baudrillard (1998),<sup>45</sup> less preoccupied than Plato about the imperfectness of imitation, shifts his gaze to the cardinal event of modern culture: the disappearance of an analogous relationship between the sign and the real in representation. He then maps a progression of images, representation and development, concluding in the complete disappearance of the relationship between the sign and the real. This progression goes from a reflection of a basic reality toward another stance, where the image masks and perverts basic reality on the way toward absencing basic reality and ultimately arriving at pure simulacrum, which is not connected to even a facsimile of reality in any form.

Simulacrum stands for itself:

"...Representation starts from the principle that the sign and the real are equivalent (even if this equivalence is Utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Conversely, simulation starts from the Utopia of this principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation tries to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum. In the first case, the image is a good appearance: the representation is of the order of sacrament. In the second, it is an evil appearance: of the order of *maléfice*. In the third, it plays at being an appearance: it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer in the order of appearance at all, but of simulation..."<sup>46</sup>

Baudrillard's "good appearance" – as compared to "maléfice", sorcery and simulation (as opposite to the natural) – parallels the ambivalent and different attributes that are

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<sup>44</sup> Abrams, M.H. (1971) *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. London/ New York: Oxford University Press, p. 32.

<sup>45</sup> Baudrillard, J. (1998) *Simulacra and Simulations*, Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, Mark Poster (Ed.), Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.166-184.

<sup>46</sup> Baudrillard, J. (1998) *Simulacra and Simulations*. Mark Poster, ed. *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*. California, Stanford University Press, pp.166-184.

diachronically related to mirror-changing faculties. Still, it is difficult to imagine the moment that human beings met mirror, often obviated as generative of the aura enveloping the mirror's cultural significance.

One of the most elaborated of mirror cultural significances is the double, as we will see later on. Reactions to meeting a double in one of its latest versions – the clone – now performed in the public and philosophical discussion surrounding cloning. For instance, Schirmacher continues his discussion of the postmodern world by stating that *being* has become *cloning*, and that the meaning of cloning has little to do with the scientific, technological act. Humanity protects its vitality, its principally undefined status of changeability by using the various media to cloning the many ways in which a human being exists. He looks to Lyotard's "Just Gaming" to support his position that the postmodern decision is about becoming a player rather than a spectator in the cloning of humans for the purpose of having a good life, In the spirit of the new name of humanity – *homo generator*, with "openness as our existential taste and co-evolutionary power as our design" – what we clone is exactly this attitude of open generation, never mere copying of anything.<sup>47</sup>

Oscillating between idiosyncrasies praising humanistic Narcissism and those condemning it in favor of Nature, God or the body-soul relationship, mirrors as mediating channels absorb each of these significations in an altruist, transparent

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<sup>47</sup> Schirmacher claims that humans are solely and fully responsible for artificial life, which is our only life. By cloning freely with media and designing a life-world in between natality and mortality, we fail to pay attention to the artificial life we generate. His advice is that we become more experienced in perceiving the imperceptible actions of true humanity. The art of living: enjoying life without knowing why, living happily without expectations and acting without believing in the principles of our action, is rooted in judgment and prudence instead of concepts. Cloning humans with media works to distract our attention from the ethical art of living. In the media we simulate humanity to the point of not recognizing ourselves anymore, and this life-consuming activity helps us to stay clear of authentic humanity. In ethical life, humanity fulfills itself; we are vaguely aware of this and we need to forget this at once. Schirmacher writes that to work toward this forgetting is media's strongest claim. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang\\_Schirmacher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Schirmacher).

performance. These same idiosyncrasies arouse different and even polar effects. For instance, consider the possibility of reading the Narcissus myth as an archaic belief in the existence of a double, or of a soul taking substance as one of the most terrifying visions but at the same time as one of the most cherished desires, linked to the possibility of eternal human life. Melchior Bonnet (2002) recalls the ethnology of this idea as found in many "primitive" cultures, including contemporary cultures. Homer, for instance, attributed a dual existence to man, one in his perceptible, physical being; the other in an invisible semblance unleashed only at his death (Melchior-Bonnet, 2002).

In the clash caused by the meeting of anguish, the consequence of confronting the self as other and the cherishing of immortality stands the mirror, once as helping to know Thyself and, in parallel, if misused, as a device for deception. The mirror invited man not to mistake himself for God, to avoid pride by recognizing his limits and to improve himself. Mirror's flexibility and transformability performed signification absorbency as either "an idealized vision or a pejorative projection," either a reflection of God or an instrument of the devil.<sup>48</sup> Ambivalence accompanied the mirror's history: At the eve of the historical Mirror, perpetual and constant in its presence if not appearance, Ronell suggests a space, a caesura, created, as Jean Paul proposes, of an alternative ethics. In these ethics, the stupid, rather than the genius, figures as one who works with the known; he is therefore a creature of mimesis. The stupid are thus incapable of reflection in mirrors, and therefore also incapable of appearing as being. Jean Paul proposes giving the stupid eyes in order to transform them into the smart. In transforming the "blind sage" into a stupid – perhaps due to the blind gesture of

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<sup>48</sup> Melchior Bonnet, S. (2001) *The Mirror: A History* (translated by Katharine H. Jewett) New York/ London: Routledge, p. 107-108..

almost falling when extending his arms as if looking for "light" in order to see within the dark (Derrida, 1992), and clearly differentiating biological from prosthetic seeing – Ronell questions Jean Paul, as if wanting to go further, to suggest that the stupid are mirrors reflecting all those – other than themselves – that the mirror reflects. This suggestion widens the uncanny doubling motif (Ronell, 2003: 15-19).<sup>49</sup>

Glancing at mirrors and mirror figures has occasioned a journey that, at moments, emboldens the mirror's uses by stressing its participation in the cultural scene as a corridor leading to a closer reading of Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*, This I intend to do.

## **2. The Mirror of Reproduction: The painting and its title**

It is far from casual to search for the parented and historical relationship between the text, Mirror and the mirror alluded to in Magritte's *La Reproduction*. At least two texts are reflected in *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*. One is the painting's title; the other reflects and inverts the cover of Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

Nine years before painting *La Reproduction*, Magritte, in an essay entitled *Words and Images* (1928), writes that a representation of things is a simulacrum, but not an imitation or a product of mimesis.<sup>50</sup> He denominates simulacrum as "ghost, phantom, appearance", adding that words and things have no connection with one another. Therefore, he continues, meaning depends less on semantics than on syntax; in this sense, the worldly experience is a "proposal" for the construction of a future model. The reverse, proposed by the mirror as a generator or obstructor of ghosts, phantoms

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<sup>49</sup> Ronell, A. (2002) *Stupidity*. Champagne, IL: Illinois University Press.

<sup>50</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets*, Andre Blavier (Ed.). Paris, Flammmrion, p. 60.

and appearances, is cardinal in Magritte work. This centrality triggers the question of the mirror's role in the text in addition to the chiasmus created by the painting in combination with the title. Much study has been devoted to the titles Magritte gave his works and to the text depicted in his paintings. Jean Roudaut (2003) explains that Magritte's choices of titles falls into different modes: The Cezanne period, when the work's title quite conventionally designated the objects in the pictures as if image and name were two sides of the same coin. In another period, the titles seem motivated by a concern for displacement. Magritte himself<sup>51</sup> referred to the poetic function of the titles:

"...Question du titre.

Je crois que le meilleur titre d'un tableau, c'est un titre poétique. Autrement dit, un titre compatible avec la émotion plus ou moins vive que nous éprouvons en regardant un tableau.

J'estime qu'il faut l'inspiration pour trouver ce titre.

Un titre poétique n'est pas une sorte de renseignement qui apprend, par exemple, le nom de la ville dont un tableau représente le panorama, ni le nom du modèle dont on regarde le portrait, ni enfin le nom du rôle symbolique attribue à une figure peinte.

Un titre qui à cette fonction de renseigner ne demande aucune inspiration pour être donne à un tableau.

Le titre poétique n'a rien à nous apprendre, mais il doit nous surprendre et nous enchanter (Magritte, 1946)..."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Blavier, A. (Ed.) (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecrits Complets*. Paris: Flammarion, p. 263.

<sup>52</sup> . Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecrits Complets*, Andre Blavier (Ed.). Paris, Flammmrion, p. 60. The question of the title, translation by Micaela Kramer:

I believe that the best title for a painting is a poetic one. In other words, a title that is compatible with the more or less vivid emotion one experiences when looking at a painting.

I consider inspiration necessary to find such a title.

A poetic title is not a piece of information that informs one, for instance, of the name of the town which has its landscape portrayed in a painting. Nor does it inform one of the name of the model whose portrait one is gazing at; nor, finally, does it inform one of the name of the symbolic role that is attributed to a painted figure.

A painting title is, by allusion, a paratext that, according to Genette (1982), is all the material of a book *other* than the actual text, book, cover, illustrations, notes, author photos. These features are integral to its role of "threshold" as Genette describes it: "If it is not yet *the* text, it is already textual."<sup>53</sup> Those Magritte paintings titles that displace the relationship between title and painting perform as surprising rhetorical devices, producing a paradox or questioning. Detachment of the title's referent while still playing with its referential function does not empty the title of its reference. Instead, the title acquires an oxymoronic flavor that transports – through reversal – the contrary meaning, making us wonder what is being said. It is a kind of *mise en abyme* existing between a painting and its title that not only does *not* reflect the opposite of what we see, it installs a reflection that acquires an autonomous status. *La Reproduction Interdite* only reproduces mirrors, texts and subject figures whereas those who see the painting reproduce the viewer's position indefinitely. So providing only the seer's reproduction, the law of the painting's informational or communicational transmission is violated. A portrait without a face named after someone called "Edward James" casts doubt on the portrait's validity as portrait and the possibilities of the subject's representational status. Instead, following the theoretical drive he has taken, Abrams relates to the farewell to Mirror as a sign indicating a search for a relationship not based on mimesis or imitation. In this as in other paintings, Magritte responds with mirrors – all the mirrors in the world – and plays with the idea of resemblance and enlargement of the visible in a reality where a virtual world can (or perhaps cannot) propose alternative views of the most ordinary,

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A title with such an informative function requires no inspiration in order to be given to a painting.

A poetic title has nothing to teach us; rather, it must surprise and enchant us (Magritte, 1946).

<sup>53</sup> Genette, G. (1982) *Palimpsestes*, Paris : Seuil «Poétique».

daily things. The mirror between the title and the painting, though invisible, nevertheless reflects Mirror as re-producer in reverse.

Foucault's reading (1982)<sup>54</sup> of Magritte' *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* addressed the title's textuality, not only as paratext but also as conversation between text and image. Thus, approaching the painting from its title, at first glance it looks as if visual perspective has a rhetorical function. So, thanks to the title, this hyperreal copy of the copy of an almost convincing impression of being in front of the painting, as if the space before the mirror is truncated by the painting's title, a title that intimates a variety of layers by fulfilling its usual function. As analyzed by Foucault (1982), the title *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* ("this is not a pipe") raises the possibility of Magritte's inclusion of texts in paintings as calligrams installing repetition free of rhetoric. Instead of negatively affirming that a painting is not the thing described (*ceci n'est pas une pipe*), *La Reproduction Interdite* affirms the contrary by employing a different formula of negative discourse. The title thus mirrors the painting and the painting the title by opposing parts of the title with parts of the painting. The first part of the title, situated before the colon is: "The Portrait of Edward James." But, this is no ordinary portrait: we know it is James's portrait only because the title says so. We do not really see a usual portrait, nor do we see a direct representation of Edward James. The second part of the title, installed after the colon, designates whose figure is not to be reproduced even though the painting reproduces this figure and does so twice. Hence, the title and the painting criss-cross internal negations; like a mirror, they reflect opposites. Not only is the painting not what is described in the title, but its text and image reflect each other from opposing sides. As a result, there is no portrait (or subject

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<sup>54</sup> Foucault. M. (1973) *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, Fata Morgana, Fontfroide-le-Haut. |

representation) and the forbidden reproduction of the observed event is in fact executed.

The title is inscribed in a paratextual position on the border of the painting. As Jacques Derrida suggests in his lecture "Title (to be Specified)", this positioning gives the title the structure of a name. By inducing the effects of a proper name, the title remains, quite uniquely foreign to language as discourse, thanks to the very way in which it introduces an abnormal referential function [...] (Derrida, 1981: 7).<sup>55</sup> Jean Luc Nancy (2005:8-9), like Magritte,<sup>56</sup> approaches image as resemblance and reminds to us that in his *This is Not a Pipe*, Magritte merely enunciates the banal paradox of representation as imitation. Nancy explains that the truth is something like an image of a pipe accompanied by the title "this is a pipe", specifically, that the title is given not to repeat the same paradox but to reverse it. The artist does so to affirm that a thing represents itself only inasmuch as it resembles itself and (mutely) says of itself: *I am* the thing. The image is a nonlinguistic statement or the showing of the thing in its sameness: but this sameness is not only not declared, or stated otherwise, it is an *other sameness* [italics in the original], differing from the sameness of language and concept. As a sameness that does not belong to either identification or signification (that of "a pipe", for example) it is supported only by itself in the image and as an image Jean Luc Nancy (2005:8-9).

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<sup>55</sup> Derrida, J. (1981) *Titre à préciser*, *Sub-Stance* 31, 6-14.

<sup>56</sup> Magritte wrote largely on the concept of *resemblance* in his paintings. In one version of a text called *la Resemblance*, he explains the relationship between thought, image and resemblance:

" L'art de peindre-qui mérite vraiment de s'appeler l'art de la ressemblance- permet de décrire par la peinture, une pensée susceptible de devenir apparente. Cette pensée comprend exclusivement les figures que le monde apparente nous offre: personnes, astres, meubles, armes, solides, inscriptions, etc. La ressemblance réunit spontanément ces figures dans un ordre qui évoque directement le mystère. La description d'une telle pensée ne souffre pas d'"originalité". L'originalité ou la fantaisie n'y apporterait que faiblesse ou misère. La précision et la charme d'une image de la ressemblance se perdent au bénéfice d'une manière originale de décrire la ressemblance. Il n'y a pas différentes manières de représenter la pensée inspirée qui ressemble au monde apparent. "Le comment peindre" la ressemblance doit se borner à étendre des couleurs sur une surface, de telle sorte que leur aspect affectif s'éloigne et laisse apparaître une image de la ressemblance. Blavier, A. (2001) (Ed.) *Rene Magritte, Ecrits Complètes*. Paris: Flammarion. pp. 529-533.

The subject forbidden reproduction – hinted at by Magritte's placing it as a paradox in his painting's title – might refer, according to Nancy, to the distinctiveness of the image, found mainly in the dissimilarity that inhabits resemblance, a dissimilarity that agitates and troubles resemblance by means of the pressures of spacing and passion. Absence and presence are interwoven according to Nancy; resemblance gathers itself together as a force of the *same* – the same differing in itself and from itself. Hence, Nancy adds, the enjoyment (*jouissance*) we take in it:

"...We touch on the same and on this power that affirms this: I am indeed what I am, and I am this well beyond or well on this side of what I am for you, for your aims and your manipulation. We touch on the intensity of this withdrawal or this excess. Thus *mimesis* encompasses *methexis*, a participation or contagion through which the image seizes us..." (Nancy, 2005: 9).

Enchantment, called into performance, prepares a second stance by adapting the space between the painting and its title for the doubling of the paratextual space as an empty corridor. In this corridor, it is possible to install what lies between the title and a painting. Here, everything is recognizable and namable; yet, as if echoing and figuring Arthur Gordon Pym's comment in Poe's story: "Many unusual phenomena now indicated that we are entering upon a region of novelty and wonder" (Poe, 1838, Ch. 25).

*La Reproduction Interdite*, as "a portrait", is therefore obstructed and negated; it does not follow the modal or generic conventions of the traditional portrait. Instead, it reproduces a metaleptic figure, as we will learn, that advances in time, eternalizing and temporalizing in unison, a gesture that oscillates between inhibiting and inviting the viewer to observe or to participate in the portrait. Mirror is there performing a reversal of sides, directions and time, prolonging visibility, reflecting into time and obstructing the usual reflection found in a mirror. Mirror is thus behaving as a

painting of a mirror that will forever withdraw the portrait from the  $n$  viewers who will stare at Magritte's work.

In a way, this painting "plays" with Derrida's hypothesis of sight:

"...This is not only the hypothesis of the specular or of the imaginary duel. For a mirror is also necessarily inscribed in the structure of self-portraits of draftsmen drawing *something else*. But in this case, one must suppose, in addition to the mirror, another object, one that does not look, an eyeless, abocular object, or at least (since it may be a third being supplied with eyes or an optical apparatus) an object that, from its standpoint, its place, takes nothing into consideration, has no views. Only the topic of an abocular object, only this topical remedy, rescues Narcissus from blindness. And this to infinity, since there is no object, as such, without a supposed spectator: the hypothesis of the sight... (Derrida, 1992:63)..."<sup>57</sup>

On the border of the painting, because it is part of this very border, the title functions as a calligram, the calligram of its own name, the title. The calligram, in Foucault's view, uses the capacity of letters to signify both linear elements that can be arranged in space as well as signs that must unroll according to a unique chain of sound. As signs, letters permit us to fix words; as lines, they let us give shape to things. Thus the calligram aspires playfully "to efface the oldest opposition of our alphabetical civilization: to show and to name; to shape and to say; to reproduce and to articulate; to imitate and to signify; to look and to read" (Foucault, 1982).<sup>58</sup>

Paratext is, rather, a "threshold." It is "a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: A privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy..." (Genette, 1982). *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*, in its first part, according to Magritte's explanation, is indeed a work of art whose reproduction is forbidden according to authorship rights. But the painting also resembles what is irreproducible. What we see is a unique occurrence, a figural combination of casual objects assembled to represent – in negation – precisely what is

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<sup>57</sup> Derrida, J. (1992) *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas), Chicago, Chicago University Press, p. 63.

<sup>58</sup> Foucault, M. (1973) *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, Fata Morgana, Fontfroide-le-Haut

duplicated by the painting's title: the commonality of reproduction or the lack of originality in which the mirror is a generating *and* generated device.

Where is the author (the *figurator*) in this creation? Is he before the oeuvre or walking out of it? Roland Barthes would declare the birth of the reader and the death of the author by installing a space or someone who, like Edward James, either lacks a frontal physiognomy or is held together in a single field. The reader is born and the author dies through all the traces constituting the written (figural) text.<sup>59</sup> The original author, the poet Edward James, interpreted by the painter, seems to be walking out of the scene and performing an entrance into the author's function (Foucault, 1997).<sup>60</sup> His performance leaves open questions such as: What constitutes an author's work? What should be excluded or included in this work? At what point does a person begin to function as an author? Has his name a role in classifying works? Is he an actual, historical person? Or is he a function of the discourse itself? And what, of course, is his relationship to the painter, who considers himself a poet, and to the other two authors traced in the painting: Poe and Baudelaire?

Edward James, in *La Reproduction*, is 'impersonated only by his name, the portrait of a man without a face, as if escaping the mark of the other's transcendence or the possibility of approach *qua* approach, the exposure of one to the other' (Levinas, 1981: 94).<sup>61</sup> Or is this painting, *al unison*, marking the possibility of "trace dance," rewarding and forwarding the possibility of exposing the viewer's face as the other? Merleau-Ponty has captured this possibility as *chiasm*, a criss-cross movement between the visible and the invisible. For him, the invisible is not what is hidden but

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<sup>59</sup> Ronell, A. (1994) Namely Eckerman in: *Finitude's Score, Essays for the End of the millennium*, Lincoln, NE /London: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 159-182.

<sup>60</sup> Foucault, M. (1977) What is an Author? (translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon) in: *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Donald F. Bouchard (Ed.), Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 124-127.

<sup>61</sup> Levinas, E. (1981) *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* (translated by A. Lingis), Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

what appears in the "doubled with a complementary vision or with another vision: myself seen from without, such as another would see me, installed in the midst of the visible, occupied in considering it from a certain spot" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004:252). Hence, what is invisible to seers is the objective perception of themselves as seers because, for Merleau-Ponty, our body is composed of two leaves:

"...from one side a thing among things and otherwise what sees them and touches them; we say, because it is evident, that it unites these two properties within itself, and its double belongingness to the order of the "object" and the order of the "subject" reveals to us quite unexpected relations between the two orders.

It cannot be that the body has this double reference; it teaches us that each calls for the other. For if the body is a thing among things, it is so in a stronger and deeper sense than they: in the sense that we said, it is *of them*, and this means that it detaches itself upon them, and accordingly, detaches itself from them. It is not simply a thing seen in fact (I do not see my back), it is visible by right, it falls under a vision that both ineluctable and deferred..." (Merleau-Ponty 2004: 254).

Precisely because he is shown from his back by a mirror, the portrait of Edward James is a resembled thought about the mirror's capacity to mediate sight, a device that can show the apparition of the possibility of seeing or reflecting a figure in a reversed position despite the eyes' physical limitations. The mirror appears, then, as an autonomous device through which human sight is expanded so as to enable the person to see himself seeing. Mirrors also multiply *ad infinitum* the variations of chiasmic sight, that is, the action of reversing the visible into the invisible and vice versa as complementary rather than contradictory processes.

Edward James's triple figure – the two seen in the painting and the invisible figure, captured in the photograph that was employed by Magritte as a model – are not identical to one another for it is the copy of the copy that informs variations of

perspective, light, color and distance. *The other-way-around sight* – or *back vision* – is the aperture to wondering: Which is the projected and which is the reflected figure? Eco's assumptions, as we have seen, are not so obvious or unequivocal from this moment on. Seeing from this moment on involves a fluctuating movement, going from one copy to the other, confusing the where of the origin and the when of its originality. The three copies are traces of Edward James, traces that feed James' poetic performances from, among others, Magritte's portraits of the poet. If, by the Lacanian mirror stage, we have learnt that mirrors help to gather into one figure the fractured views of our own body, Magritte devolves and returns to the fragmented sight of the self. Instead of deconstructing the body as seen by one's own sight, the mirror in Magritte's painting does so by effacing the front figure or frontal view, denying the eye its sight and reconstructing, with the aid of a mirror, the look from behind. This view is itself a mirrored image, one that calls for another body in which mirrors rather than eyes empower the eyes limited possibilities, imposed by their positioning. This new sight of the subject, the poet and the model infinitely multiplied by Edward James's mysterious presence in *La Reproduction*, is characterized mainly by empowering the limited physical conditions of seeing through the use of the prosthesis, that is: Mirror. Mirror indeed introduces a powerful potential for developing the possibility of sight to see even without eyes. However, at the same moment, sight of the subject and the subject's eyeless seeing trigger two pulsations: one that mourns the eyes' limitations and the other that celebrates the eyes' alternatives and prolongations. Without speaking or addressing the seer in any way other than by turning the figure's face away, that body is signified only by its absence, its invisibility. What we usually

have in a portrait as referred to by Derrida (1992: 66-68)<sup>62</sup> – the reflected face as visible and blind to the seer and as a mirror image of the painted character – no longer exists in Magritte's *La Reproduction*.

What is made seen is the dual invisibility of an usual portrait. First there is the invisible of the model and the seer's face: their front side reversed. The painting represents the model from the back, which represents the painting's seer in the position of seeing. The *n* observers of *La Reproduction* are and therefore will be reflected by the painting of the model at the same time that they reflect the model's position. Consider this: By dialoguing with Goya's *Las Meninas*, the painting's observer is inside the painting. However, instead of being like a remembrance of the Queen's and King's figures, observing Goya looking at them, the observer of *La Reproduction* is an incognito eternalized by its absence but actualized by each of the painting's exposures to the observer's gaze. Second, there is the unseen, made visible or, as Marion (2004:27) describes it:

"...The painter descends to the undecidable frontier of the visible and the Unseen only in order to cross it himself. Feeling his way, one by one, he leads the Unseens (*les invus*) from archaic obscurity to light of visibility. Within the setting of a frame, he brings up such an Unseen to the light of day. He must consider the frame where the painting rests to be the Underworld – the one from which arises, still blind, but miraculously snatched from the reign of darkness, a new visible, which up to that point has remained unseen..."

The second part of the title of Magritte's portrait declares what is negated in the painting. Despite the referential information indicating that this painting was

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<sup>62</sup> As Derrida explains: "...in order to form the hypothesis of the self-portrait of the draftsman as self-portraitist, and seen full face, we, as spectators or interpreters, must imagine that the draftsman is staring at one point, at one point only, the focal point of a mirror that is facing him: he is staring, therefore, from the place that we occupy, in a face to face with him: this can be the self-portrait of a self-portrait: only for the other, for the spectator who occupies the place of a single focal point, but in the center of what should be a mirror. The spectator replaces and then obscures the mirror, he makes one blind, and thus in going out-at the same stroke-the eyes of the model, or else in making him, the subject (at once model, signatory, and object of the work), gouge out his own eyes in order both to see and to represent himself at work..." Derrida, J. (1992) *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 66-68.

consummated according to Edward James's request, it is impossible to identify the figure in the painting with the figure of Edward James, the poet: With his back to himself and to the artist, he is unrecognizable, walking into the *a-venir* of his self-reflections. More than in *This Is Not a Pipe*, the portrait of Edward James includes a double negation. This is Edward James, but it could also be anyone; therefore, this is not an ordinary portrait. One might have a thought about the two: Could the seen portrait and the unseen portrait (a photographic model) of Edward James have been traced figuratively?

What is this figure? It is the figure of a man discovering not only a mirror but himself in the mirror, a kind of reminder and resurrection *a la fois*. It reminds us of the unusual agency of Mirror and its later genesis in culture as mirrors, horrifying devices reflecting the self as the other. Two double negations install the mirror not only in the painting itself but also in its title. The mirror, called into performance by the painting's title, empowers sight to the point of allowing us to see what it is usually invisible, or what is impossible to see. By "entitling" the painting *A Portrait of Edward James*, Magritte inverts the order of things and posits the seer in the position of staring at the back of a painted figure, positioning the portrait as the interface of representation (this portrait's possibilities, all the portraits of the world generally) and opening to the seer the passage or movement of the portrait's trace – instead of its *retrotrait*. *La Reproduction Interdite*'s model is a seer seeing a hint of himself, infinitely reproduced as a seer through the *retrotrait* of Edward James; a possibility that evades memory and ruin (Derrida, 1992), that embraces reproduction not only as a work of art but as what is (in)visible in it.

The painting demands sight in performance; once in performance, this sight is recruited to a series of closures. Paul Nougé has said that a portrait can try to be like

its model but while doing so, he recalled that Magritte had said that one can only hope that the model would try to be like his portrait (Nouge, 1997).<sup>63</sup> In another place, Magritte denied the very possibility of portraiture in its traditional form (Magritte, 1962 )<sup>64</sup> because, as well-illustrated in a variety of paintings, faces are mostly veiled by other objects or clothes or substituted completely by objects, confirming what the artist described as *quadruple chiasmus* in a letter to Edward James: "An object may be replaced by its image; an object may be replaced by its name; an object may be replaced by any form; an object may be replaced by any word" (Magritte, 1938).<sup>65</sup>

Some of *La Reproduction's* place in Magritte's thinking may be understood by considering the painting of Edward James from his back as (perhaps) a reminder of a revealing incident that took place between the two. Magritte, who may have tried to imitate the warm, close relationship shared by Dali and Edward James (Magritte, 1937), asked the latter to support him economically by paying him £100 annually in return for what Magritte considered the best of his paintings. In his letter to James, Magritte distinguishes himself from so many "artistic fabricators" by denominating himself and James as a certain type of men ("...you, along with a few rare men of whom I am one") and referring to money as "a means in current use, and nothing more," adding that "[i]t so happens that by chance you have more of it than you need, and I, too little. It would be perfectly fitting and 'above board' for you to provide me with some from time to time, as you had begun to do" (Magritte, 1937). James rejected Magritte's offer, instead inviting the painter and his wife on a trip to Italy.

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<sup>63</sup> Nouge, P. (1997) *Rene Magritte (in extenso)*, Brussels: Didier Devillez.

<sup>64</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets*, Andre Blavier (Ed.). Paris, Flammmrion, p. 591.

<sup>65</sup> "Il arrive q'un portrait tache de ressembler a son modele. Mais disait Magritte, l'on peut souhaiter que ce modele tache de ressembler a son portrait." In: Paul Nouge (1943) *Rene Magritte ou Les Images defendues*, Bruxelles: Auteurs Assocoies, p. 42; Letter from Magritte to Edward James, 6 May 1938 in: Abadie, D. (2003) *Magritte*. New York: Distributed Art Inc., p.251.

This time it was Magritte who turned down the proposition.<sup>66</sup> The patron-artist relationship between the poet James and the painter Magritte ended after Magritte had painted six works commissioned and paid for by James. Nevertheless, their friendship and correspondence endured for many years more. Edward James's portraits by Magritte – *La Reproduction Interdite* and *The Pleasure Principle* – painted using photographs of the "sitter" (Hammacher, 2003: 246), one of which was sent to Magritte by James himself and the other by Man Ray, who took the photograph, are two portraits of a man with an "invisible", unidentifiable face. Such invisible visages, as represented in portraits à la Magritte, are not like standard realistic portraits that prize the impossibility of representing at times the artist's own face and at times the sitter's face. These portraits seemingly reject the subject painted or reflect on the possibility or perhaps refusal to portray blindness (Derrida, 1992).<sup>67</sup>

*La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James* is a text that plays and dialogues with a painting creating a closure (*La Reproduction Interdite*) that is not so closed and an aperture (*The Portrait of Edward James*) that is not so open. In both cases, the painting-observer reproduces what is negated by the title and installs himself as an observer, replacing Edward James.

### **3. Decomposing Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*: Mirrors in Remediation and in Translation**

#### **3. 1 Introduction**

Remediation and Translation are two cultural practices suggested in Magritte's painting *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*. The first is brought on through collation of the relationship established between image and text

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<sup>66</sup> Hammacher, R. (2003) Edward James and Rene Magritte, Magicians of the Surreal In: Daniel Abadie (Ed.), *Magritte*, New York: Distributed Art Inc., p. 244.

<sup>67</sup> Derrida, J. (1992) *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas), Chicago, Chicago University Press., p. 63.

within the painting; the second by the presence of Poe's oeuvre, translated by Baudelaire, as one of the painting's images.

This part of the work follows and elaborates Mirror's function in remediation and translation processes. Mirror is assumed to contribute to the consolidation of the mirror's triptych technology, which includes chiasmus, mise en abyme and metalepsis, offering a unique glance over Mirror's functions

In *La Reproduction Interdite*, the sight of "the other" haunted by the mirror enters the scene through the mysterious intimation of two specters – Poe and Baudelaire – with each appearing twice: Their names appear on the book cover painted in the painting. Segments of that cover appear twice, once as Poe's book *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and once as if reflected in the mirror, but in reverse image. By introducing these images into the painting, Magritte presents and then reverses the original order of appearance of the author's – Poe – and the translator's – Baudelaire – names. These segments of the painting thus draw us toward considering the possibility of viewing the mirror as a participant in translation, perhaps even mediating between the "original" and its "translation", the "translation" and its "original".

Between this pair – Poe-Baudelaire – Magritte installs himself as Poe's assiduous reader and admirer but more as Baudelaire's companion. The mirrored reflection generates actualization of the textual images created by Poe in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*<sup>68</sup> (1837), translated into French by Baudelaire in 1858<sup>69</sup> on the

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<sup>1</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) Rene Magritte, *Ecris Complets*. Andre Blavier (ed.). Paris, Flammmrion. p. 440. As we see, Poe leaves open the possibility of a previous text to his own text and a difference between the way proposed to read the text before publication as compared to the order of writing. Note on the text: Episodes 1 and 2 appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in January and February of 1837. The remainder of the text retains the *Harper's* chapters. *Pym* has been called a derivative text. In two of the Episodes, highlighted text is linked to a potential source, or, in the language of this site, "Pretext." The Preface was published in 1838. A strictly chronological reading of *Pym*, as published, would then

one hand, and remediation through the inclusion of the same text in the painting on the other.

Once in motion, the reflections in the Poe-Baudelaire written-now-pictorial work – in Magritte's painted but textual work and between the two genres (the painted *Portrait* by Magritte and the written *Narrative* by Poe-Baudelaire) – unlock infinite additional reflections that configure affirmation of what is negated in the painting's title: "*Il n'y a que reproduction*" (There is nothing but Reproduction) rather than "*La reproduction interdite*" (Reproduction is Forbidden).

The importance of rereading *The Portrait of Edward James: La Reproduction Interdite* as part of a work that explores the techno-cultural positings and figurations of the mirror rests precisely on the mirror's apparition performances in the painting's interpretation. These positings, figures and apparitions introduce, in my view, the opportunity to think about and discuss two important cultural practices, effectuated through mirrored traces and erasures: Remediation and Translation.

*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (and in other works by Poe-Baudelaire) and Magritte's active participation in the *re-semblance* of erased mirrors, traced in cultural reproduction found performed in *The Portrait of Edward James*, add new spaces to the consideration of the Mirror's participation as an essential reproductive device. This part of the work is dedicated to a reading of Remediation and Translation in *La Reproduction* as activated by Magritte's mirror. These practices may perhaps be

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proceed in the order: Episode 1, Episode 2, Preface, Episode 1, etc. For a strictly chronological reading of Pym as it was (most probably) written puts the Preface last. See:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/silverman/poe/fulltext.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Baudelaire's translation of *The Narrative* into *Les Aventures* creates a doubling of literary genres within the same oeuvre.

confirmed by affirming what is negated, stages where some of the most important performances of Mirror as a technology of cultural reproduction take place.

### 3.2 Interwoven Biographies: Magritte, Poe, Baudelaire

Before proceeding to our reading, it is worth stopping to glance at the relationship woven between Magritte, Poe and Baudelaire. By deciphering the traces of their common relationships, we may learn something on Translation and Remediation procedures.

Magritte expressed his attitude toward the two poets by citing their works in paintings such as *The Domain of Arnheim* (1943), in which he alludes to Poe's sketch of the same name, as well as to Baudelaire's poems "Les fleurs du mal" (1869) and "La Géante".<sup>70</sup>

*Homesickness* is a painting that expresses Magritte's understanding of the Poe-Baudelaire a relationship characterized by an unresolved nostalgia. One of the alternative titles Magritte proposed for this painting – *The Spleen de Paris ou Philadelphie* – before finally deciding which of the painting's titles links Baudelaire to Poe, This title, which he mentions in a letter to his friend Scutenaire,<sup>71</sup> would have identified the geographic significance of both Poe and Baudelaire by representing their ambivalent nostalgia in the painted figures of wings and the lion. The wings help one cruise over the ocean between Paris and Philadelphia, or vice versa, while the lion stays put, firmly marking the place of kinship and stability.<sup>72</sup> Such a title captures these meanings more than does "*Homesickness*".

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<sup>70</sup> See: "La Géante" translations into English, <http://fleursdumal.org/poem/118>. Magritte quoting Baudelaire: The Giantess (*La Géante*) 1931. Oil, gouache and Chinese ink on canvas, Ludwig Isorel Museum, Cologne. Abadie, D. (2003) (ed.) *Magritte*. New York, Distributed Art Publishers. Inc. p. 27.

<sup>71</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets*. Andre Blavier (ed.). Paris, Flammmrion. p. 415

<sup>72</sup> See Magritte, R. (1941) "Homesickness": <http://imagecache2.allposters.com/images/pic/tel/MA755~Homesickness-1940-Posters.jpg>.

Despite this equivalence between the two poets, Magritte held different attitudes regarding the duo as he did toward their respective figural and textual corpora. Magritte articulated parallels between his and Baudelaire's works as if his readings of the poet symmetrically accompanied his work, in staggered explorations as his painting progressed. In contrast, at every opportunity Magritte pondered over Poe's work with great admiration.<sup>73</sup> In a 1966 letter to Marcel Fryns, Magritte says of Poe: "He has always had very great importance for me, given his singular poetic preoccupations. I sense in him a kindred spirit, with who I am in complete harmony". In his pictorial and textual works, Magritte shows himself to be a connoisseur of Poe's works, frequently quoting the poet's "The Philosophy of Composition"<sup>74</sup> (published by Baudelaire together with his translation of "The Raven" and his own preamble, entitled "*La Genèse d'un poème*"), which stresses the role of composition, and "Eureka", which evokes the finality of a carefully thought-out work.<sup>75</sup> It is clear that Magritte read Poe's work in French, meaning that Baudelaire's more or less transparent presence influenced Magritte's reading of the texts. Nevertheless, compared to Derrida or Lacan, as we shall see, Magritte made no critical comments of Baudelaire's translations. Magritte liked Baudelaire's poetry; he considered his readings of the French poet as an accompaniment to his own work. We can find traces of Magritte's attitude toward Baudelaire's work since he used to revise Baudelaire's works, which he quoted in paintings as if repeating a modified form of the other's works. He thereby awakened an uncanny feeling of similarity, produced by

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<sup>73</sup> . Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets*. Andre Blavier (ed.). Paris, Flammmrion. On Magritte's relationship with Baudelaire: See pp. 42, 62-63, 116, 127, 130, 177, 218, 91, 148, 189, 219. On Magritte's relationship with Poe: See pp. 42, 91, 116, 188, 191, 196, 201, 212, 217.

<sup>74</sup> Poe, E. A. (1846) *The Philosophy of Composition*.  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/poe/composition.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Roudaut, J. (2003) *La grand Illusion*. In Daniel Abadie (ed.) *Magritte*. New York, Distributed Art Publishers. Inc.. p. 28

transformative painterly mirrors that echoed the one in the other in a current reiteration of visual resonances.

Magritte protested Sartre's interpretation of the Baudelaire-Poe relationship. This interpretation, based on what Sartre comprehended as Baudelaire's morbid attachment to a dead man, led Sartre to negatively judge the poet's martyrdom.<sup>76</sup> Since Magritte himself rejected the possibility of understanding the Baudelaire-Poe relationship psychoanalytically, he declared Sartre to be incapable of conceiving that Baudelaire could love Poe's stories solely because they were admirable.<sup>77</sup>

The question of Magritte interjection into the Baudelaire-Poe relationship in *La Reproduction* created a place for reflection on a variety of couple relationships, speculative/conceptual/analytical and real: Baudelaire–Poe, Magritte–Poe, Magritte–Baudelaire, Magritte–James, the French and English language, geography and culture, mirror and text, reversing and non-reversing mirrors, seer and painter, original and translation and so forth. Moreover, Magritte, through the modality of readings as the background to his own work, insinuates translation (Baudelaire) and original work into his own production by citing, transforming and swallowing.

Magritte gave recognition to the inspiring influence of Poe on his work that, thanks to translation, meant incorporating the Poe-Baudelaire relationship into his own corpus.

Witnessing this reunion insinuates one way of configuration, what Derrida calls the formation of a trend (*mouvance*):

"...A 'trend' and not a path or line of thinking—for this latter figure also comes with neo Heideggerian or pretechnical *connotations*, now, at the very point where somehow taking into account technics, the *techne* of bodies, or ecotechnics may deliver to us a criterion for certain discrepancies between the different motifs of this trend. And it is furthermore a 'trend' of thinking and not a 'field' or 'context', so as to avoid the risk of adding to the connotations that I have recalled a hypothesis I hold to be questionable: It is the hypothesis of a

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<sup>76</sup> Sartre, J.P. (1950) *Baudelaire*. Paris, Gallimard.

<sup>77</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) *René Magritte, Ecris Complets*. Andre Blavier (ed.). Paris, Flammmrion. p. 414.

historical space with a strictly determinable, objectivizable contour; a space with its unity, the self-contact of some self-identity; an inside and outside; in a word, the whole objective set of a configuration, a 'paradigm' or an episteme, a set that would not be structurally open—as I believe that it remains forever—and that from then on, crouching on the front lines, could occasionally become a battlefield (*Kampfplatz*) and a field of appropriation in the good or bad tradition..." (Derrida, 2005:216).<sup>78</sup>

Magritte, in continuing Baudelaire's work, resembles Poe-Baudelaire and thus marks the epistemological relationship between the three as pertinent to his own version of a repertoire encompassing painting, writing, poetry and figuration. As we might expect, Magritte marks the similitudes of his body's genealogy by use of the mirror, a motif likewise extant in Poe-Baudelaire.

Magritte also stresses the differences between himself and his predecessors, a message delivered through the movement and perspective extended by *Mirror* to the *à venir*. The mirror's oscillating effect, which Magritte uses to such great effect, creates and maintains a specific way of marking reflective relationships, as we shall see.

In "Eckerman, Namely"<sup>79</sup> and throughout the Goethe-Eckerman couple case, Avital Ronell reads, in my view, the cultural chiasmus that takes place between two writers, in this case Goethe and Eckerman. She reads this space of reflectivity as if lying between two of the many layers of their mutual relationship, which includes the literary, the artistic, the style, the psychological, the pedagogical, the legal, the historical and the corporal ones.

Some of her insights are applicable to a reading of Poe-Baudelaire-Magritte as a triptych, alluded to by Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite*. One of the differences between the Goethe–Eckerman and Magritte Poe–Baudelaire duos is the physical

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<sup>78</sup> Derrida, J. (2005) *On touching-Jean Luc Nancy* (trans. Christine Irizarry). Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, p. 216.

<sup>79</sup> Avital Ronell exposes the twofold chiasmus between Eckerman and Goethe as including witnessing the poet in his solitude and having handing over its principal elements on the one hand while Eckerman was "Goethe's shadow, a phantom, a writing hand attached to Goethe's voice" on the other (Ronell, 1994:164). Ronell, A. (1994) *Namely Eckerman in Finitude's Score, Essays for the End of the Millennium*. Lincoln & London, University of Nebraska Press, p. 159-182.

presence of mirror as intervention. The mirror is what generates the performative and transitive movement from Baudelaire's translation of Poe's narrative *Pym* to its reflection in the painted figure of the mirror, which reflects the book cover figure as a reversed text, positing first Baudelaire and then Poe; both are thus portrayed by Magritte. It is as if by means of this transitive movement that Poe, Baudelaire and Magritte, the couple and the trio, are reborn as inseparable, indestructible chiasmi, appearing even in those works of Poe not translated by Baudelaire but found in Magritte's other paintings. It is a case of doubles, trios and all the types of chiasmus possible.

The mirror's presence is what generally permits the Derridean invaginated place to find a new body that insinuates Poe, Baudelaire and Magritte as remainders of the chiasmus that had eternalized its effects beyond this specific trio and its archives. Following Derrida, we can consider this “invaginated space” as the locus of cultural production, the place where chiasmus is so extant that it is unobserved. This place includes an “internal division of the trait, impurity, corruption, contamination, decomposition, perversion, deformation, even cancerization, generous proliferation or degenerescence” (Derrida, 1980)<sup>80</sup>; it is, in effect, the place where mirrors put invention, reproduction, reflection, projection, echoing, formation and de-formation, transversion and transmission into continuous motion.

In one of his tracts on Mirror, Derrida asks what would the world be like without mirrors:

“...Imagine that mirrors would not be *in* the world, simply, included in the totality of all *onta* and their images, but that things 'present,' on the contrary, would be *in them*. Imagine that mirrors (shadows, reflections, phantasms, etc.) would no longer be *comprehended* within the structure of the ontology and myth of the cave – which also situates the screen and the mirror– but would,

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<sup>80</sup> Derrida, J. (1980). The law of genre (A. Ronell, Tr.). *Critical Inquiry*, 7(1), 55-81.

rather, envelop it in its entirety, producing here or there a particular, extremely determinate effect..." (Derrida, 1981: 324).<sup>81</sup>

Merleau Ponty, as if answering Derrida, illustrates one of the possibilities of the mirror if encrusted in the *onta*, thus becoming a thing that includes within itself reflective and reproducing capacities:

"...The seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself that he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision. And thus, for the same reason, the vision he exercises, he also undergoes from the things, such that, as many painters have said, I feel myself looked at by the things, my activity is equally passivity—which is the second and more profound sense of the narcissism: not to see in the outside, as the others see it, the contour of a body one inhabits, but especially to be seen by the outside, to exist within it, to emigrate into it, to be seduced, captivated, alienated by the phantom, so that the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen..." (Merleau Ponty, 1968:139).<sup>82</sup>

The reflection rhythm is then accelerated to confound "the where", "the when" and "the how" of the writer and the translator.

The oscillating passage from visible to invisible, mediated by the mirror, accompanies *The Narrative* (of Arthur Gordon Pym by Poe) as well as *The Portrait* (of Edward James by Magritte). Text and image oscillate in/between the *oeuvres* of both artists, Poe and Magritte. The game of confusion, conversation, repulsion, inclusion and all the situations that could perform different kinds of relationships between text and image are gathered under the Mirror's sign.

The Mirror image, as Eco says, does not exist per se, but this does not mean that a mirror image is always a reflection of some original object. Mirror qua transition medium is what activates the relationship between text and image. Gutenberg's preoccupation with the reproduction of images, elaborated through his work on

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<sup>81</sup> Derrida, J. (1981) *Dissemination* (Barbara Johnson, Tr.), London: Athlone Press, 1981, p. 324.

<sup>82</sup> Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968) *The Visible and the Invisible*. Claude Lefort (Ed.), (Alphonso Lingus, Tr.). Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, p. 139.

mirrors and his contribution to the mechanization of text reproduction, show a certain point in a genealogy that seems to go backward and forward in the formation of the doubleness existing between text and image. Text and image, the two bastard modes of representation, banned by Phaedrus, Halachic, Talmudic and Greek prescriptions because they represent "the second" hierarchic level, show a complex interrelationship. The relationship entails dependence together with the search for autonomy and self-sufficiency, with the one longing for the other, the image in the text pursuing the "real" image whereas the text in the image yearning for the inscription of its abstractedness.

### **3. 3 Text, Mirror Modes and Nancy's "Distinct Oscillation"**

Mirror as a device, mirror as an effect in the text and mirror as a character all star in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

Text remediated through mirrors into painting and painting remediated through mirrors into text belong to two works, with each representing two types of genuine representational genres or at least bearing those genres' names in their titles: "portrait" and "narrative". Oscillation between text and painting is generated by a mirror's presence in the *Narrative* and the *Portrait*. Each bears movement, previously generated by the mirrors inside both representations, text and image. Moreover, each of these representational forms bears two kinds of mirrors, the retro visor and the scrying mirror, with each mirror reflecting on the past and future of the moving text and the moving image, thereby affecting the present.

In his "The Law of the Genre", Derrida (1980) while "walking" on the limitless field of general textuality, designates the traits of the law of abounding, of excess, of participation without membership and of contamination:

"...The trait common to these classes of classes is precisely the identifiable recurrence of a common trait by which one recognizes, or should recognize, membership in a class. There should be a trait upon which one could rely in order to decide that a given textual event, a given "work", corresponds to a given class (genre, type, mode, form, etc.) And there should be a code enabling one to decide questions of class-membership on the basis of this trait..." (Derrida, 1980: 63).<sup>83</sup>

But at the same moment that the self-designation of a work appears, says Derrida, "in the blinking of an eye", at the same time that it marks its belonging to a corpus, it keeps itself from closure, from identifying itself with itself:

"...The clause of flood-gate of genre declasses what it allows to be classed. It tolls the knell of genealogy or of genericity, which it however also brings forth to the light of day. Putting to death the very thing that engenders it, it cuts a strange figure; a formless form, it remains nearly invisible; it neither sees the day nor brings itself to light. Without it, neither genre nor literature come to light, but as soon as there is this blinking of an eye, this clause or this floodgate, at the very moment that a genre or a literature is broached, at that very moment, degeneration has begun, the end has begun..." (Derrida, 1980:65-66).<sup>84</sup>

Whereas "the unfigurable figure of 'clusion" is exemplified by Derrida through his reading of Blanchot's "The Madness of the Day", oscillation between the chiasmic borders of text and image is questioned by Magritte in his *La Reproduction*.

Again: In the *Narrative*, Poe's text as alluded to in Magritte's painting, images are doubled and the unfinished text remains open, assuming a mirror image that through its oscillation causes text and image instability since mirror reflection is only possible when something or someone is echoed in a mirror. This person or object appears and disappears in front of the mirror, passing through it and reappearing, questioning while marking its presence.

Mirrors in texts, texts in mirrors, images in mirrors and mirrors in images therefore appear as identifying, forming, mixing, and deforming artifact.

The *Portrait* (Magritte painting) is the re-trait, the withdrawal of the trait going forward; Narrative loses its narrator and is lost by him, resting there at the limits of

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<sup>83</sup> Derrida, J. (1980) The Law of the Genre (trans. Avital Ronell) *Glyph 7*, Spring. pp. 55-81.

<sup>84</sup> Derrida, J. (1980) The Law of the Genre (trans. Avital Ronell) *Glyph 7*, Spring. pp. 55-81.

its/his possibilities. Here, *La Reproduction Interdite* responds to the Law of Genre and to the Law of Modes. Oscillating between their definition and characterization, *The Portrait* and *The Narrative* preside over their mixed genealogies in theater, movies, television, Internet, mobile phones and "more to come" devices, alluded to in *La Reproduction* as potentiality.

"The Oscillator, then, swings between mouth and face, between speech and vision, between the emission of sense and the reception of sense" says Nancy (Nancy, 2005:73).<sup>85</sup> What seems to be an encounter between text and image does not do so at all: On the contrary, the mouth and the look are turned forward and, continues Nancy, project parallelism into an infinite perpetuation of their double and incommunicable position "between mouth and eye, the entire face [*figure* in French, DSK] oscillates". Nancy's use of chiasmus (to which I suggest the possibility of adding the concepts *mise en abyme* and *metalepsis* as linked to Mirror and mirroring's figures) performs the idea of mirroring as generating the difference between text and image, the one presenting signification and the other presenting form. These genres stress not only parallelism but the reflection of the one on/in the other, the complementation of one with the other and the repulsion of one by the other:

"...Each one shows something [as] the same thing and yet a different thing. By showing, each one shows itself, and therefore also shows the other one across from it and facing it. It therefore also shows itself to it: image shows itself to text, which shows itself to image...

...Can a text on a text (an interpretation, a commentary) and the image of a text (the painting of a book, of a letter) be interchanged? Does the text make an image of the text it interprets? Does the image become a text on the text that it, too, interprets?...

...In any case, the two show what it means to show – to manifest, to reveal, to place in view, to shed light on, to indicate, to signal, to produce. They show,

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<sup>85</sup> Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Jeff Fort, Tr.). New York, Fordham University Press.

and in showing, they show that there are at least two kinds of showing, heterogeneous and yet stuck to one another, collated, pressed and compressed together (like the stones in an arch), attracting and repelling one another. Each is both pleasing and repulsive to the other. Each is *mostrative* and *monstrous* to the other. A monstium is the sign of a wonder. Image and text are each a wonder for the other..." (Nancy, 2005: 64)<sup>86</sup>.

After describing the Oscillator-type way of working and its senses, Nancy then notes that behind the Oscillator – while following its movement yet remaining behind the mask at each oscillation – there is something else, or someone else, neither text nor image. He calls it "Distinct", that which sets apart: the "distinct mark of sense", a *trait*. It is stigma, that is, incision, which separates. The "distinct mark of sense" belongs to two modes, to traits that are perfectly conjoined as well as contradictory. On the one hand, the mark by which sense is distinguished; on the other hand, the mark that is distinguished from every possible sense:

"...The Distinct is in fact none of that, but it is not nothing. It is the thing itself: it is what is in the ground of things, at the heart of all things that are, and that withdraws their sense of being into the secret from which all the senses draw their sensibility. The Distinct and the Oscillator have a common cause. One supports the other, which in turn agitates the first. It is no more possible to distinguish them than to confuse them..."(Nancy, 2005;75).<sup>87</sup>

Nancy details the chiasmus of each genre, text and image, and between them. Both are at one and the same time Oscillator and Distinct:

"...But we must not believe that "text and image" can be replaced by "distinct and oscillator". These two couples are not homologous. They are also chiasmic in relation to one another. Either text is distinguished in the ground of the image and this image oscillates on the former's surface, or else the image is distinguished between the lines of the text and this text oscillates throughout. The image scintillates, and the text gives off a flat, muffled sound. The image is mute, and the text crackles with white noise. Or it is the inverse, at the same instant, in the same movement. Each one, in the end, is the distinct and the oscillator of the other. Each is the *ekphrasis* of the other while also being its illustration, its illumination. *Ekphrasis* draws a phrase from its

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<sup>86</sup> Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Jeff Fort, Tr.). New York, Fordham University Press.

<sup>87</sup> . Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Jeff Fort, Tr.). New York, Fordham University Press. P. 75

other, just as, from its other, illumination draws a sight. A phrase image and a sight of sense..." (Nancy, 2005;75).

Chiasmus as activated by the mirror installs itself once as the Distinct and once as the Oscillator; once permitting and facilitating identity and once activating as a technology of complementation or repulsion.

### **3.4 Remediation: Figuring Mirrors on Text, on Images and between Them**

Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James* is not quite an illustration of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*; nor is the relationship between the two works characterized by the novel's being a precise textualization of the painting. The painting resembles Magritte's thoughts, I suppose he would say, yet what we see in the painting is a game of mirrors, introducing all the world's mirrors to their figural and textual possibilities.

This positing of mirrors between the text and the painting reveals Mirror's mediation function in addition to its functionalities as a device remediating text into painting and painting into text.

In their co-authored work "Remediation: Understanding New Media", Bolter and Grusin<sup>88</sup> point out that it is easy to see that hypermedia applications are always explicit acts of remediation: They import earlier media into digital space in order to critique and refashion them. According to the authors, hypermedia and transparent media are polar manifestations of the same desire: the desire to transpose the limits of representation and to achieve the real by bravely denying the fact of mediation; digital hypermedia seek the real by multiplying mediation so as to create a feeling of fullness, of experiential satiety that can be taken as reality.

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<sup>88</sup> Bolter, J.D. & Grusin, R. (2000) *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge & London: The MIT Press.

Bolter and Grusin (2000) consider *all* mediation to be remediation. They do not claim that this is an a priori truth; rather, they argue that at this precise historical moment, all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media. In their view, remediation is activated as the mediation of mediation. They quote Jameson (1991)<sup>89</sup>, who describes the spatialization of postmodern culture as:

"...the process whereby the traditional fine arts are mediatized; that is, they now come to consciousness of themselves as various media within a mediatic system in which their own internal production also constitutes a symbolic message and the taking of a position on the status of the medium in question..."

Jameson himself adds that:

"...The intervention of the machine, the mechanization of culture, and the mediation of culture by the Consciousness Industry are now everywhere the case, and perhaps it might be interesting to explore the possibility that they were always the case throughout human history, and within even the radical difference of older, precapitalist modes of production..." (Jameson in Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 56-57).<sup>90</sup>

According to Bolter and Grusin, remediation also marks the inseparability of reality from mediation because the media function as objects within systems of linguistic, cultural, social and economic exchange.

In parallel, remediation acts as reform since the word ultimately derives from the Latin *remederi*, which means "to heal, to restore, to health". This signification of remediation is used in the New Media realm to describe the work done by those currently repurposing earlier media into state-of-the-art digital forms (Bolter & Grusin, 2000:59).

While the three significations of *remediation* proposed by Bolter and Grusin

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<sup>89</sup> Jameson, F. (1991) *Postmodernism: On the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

<sup>90</sup> Bolter, J.D. & Grusin, R. (2000) *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge & London: The MIT Press, pp. 56-57.

(mediation of mediation, inseparability of reality and mediation, reform) touch the remediation and transmediation processes effectuated by Poe, Baudelaire and Magritte – with the aid of mirrors – as they appear in *The Portrait of Edward James: La Reproduction Interdite* and in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, it seems that all these processes not only precede what is popularly called the New Media Era, they also contain an archive of technology-driven modalities and procedures of cultural reproduction having a long history. These original processes are those that, in my view, Magritte began rescuing in a reproductive yet original way in his painting.

It is perhaps this kind of remediation<sup>91</sup> celebration, similar to Rilke's cathartic chiasmus effects, which invaded Gide while he was depicting the invisibility of writing when situated under a mirror image and simultaneously attentive to one's own mirror image:

"...I am writing on a small piece of furniture of Anna Shackleton's that was in my bedroom in the rue de Commaillles. That's where I worked; I liked it because I could see myself writing in the double mirror of the desk above the block I was writing on I looked at myself [after] each sentence, my reflection spoke and listened to me, kept me company and sustained my enthusiasm..." (Gide, 1943).<sup>92</sup>

Gide's triptych – composed by the writer seeing himself in the double mirror, vociferating to his writing reflection and listening to it while performing writing in front of the mirror – alleviated his solitude and comforted him as he completed his work. But by speaking and listening, not only did the work of art become autonomous, the double "spoke" and the triple "listened", both marking the separation between origin and copy (reflection) and opened the space for an autonomous serial

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<sup>91</sup> de Man, P. (1979) *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*. New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 20-56.

<sup>92</sup> Gide, A. (1947) *Ecris, The Journals of Andre Gide* (J. O'Brien, Tr.). London, Secker and Warburg: pp. 93 ff.

imagination. Gide, like Ronell in *The Telephone Book*, adopted the receptionist role, but instead of convoking conversations between distant speakers, as Ronell does,<sup>93</sup>

Gide differentiates between sound, sight and inscription in his own writing, distinctions impossible to grasp without a mirror.

He thereby discloses the need of prosthesis in addition to avoidance of the blindness that constitutes language (Derrida, 1992)<sup>94</sup> in his own oeuvre. Language is spoken, it speaks to itself, says Derrida, which is to say that language embodies a *form of blindness*. Thus, even for those who write without "seeing", writing per se contains memories, traces and residues of writing as at once virtual, potential and dynamic, capable of crossing all the borders separating the senses. Its being-in-potential is at once virtual and auditory, motile and tactile. Paradoxically, Gide's gaze, in his attempt to see the invisible in the mirror's reflection, enlarges the visibility of the invisible, that is, the invisibility of language or, as Marion explains it:

"...The gaze instills the invisible in the visible, not indeed to render it less visible but, on the contrary, to render it *more* visible: instead of experiencing chaotically informed impressions, we see there the very visibility of things.

...The invisible thus released—that is to say, the invisible that releases the visible from itself—radically distinguishes itself from every real void, pure defect, and desert of things. Things fill a real space, which never empties the conditions of real (*effective*). The real space, empty or not, nevertheless cannot see itself without a gaze. Yet this gaze stretches the visible by the power of the invisible...."<sup>95</sup>

Magritte painted images and words that remediate the limitations in each of them, not only by offering to the one what is missing in the other – and vice versa – but putting the one on contagion with the other:

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<sup>93</sup> Ronell, A. (1992) *The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech*. Nebraska: Nebraska University Press.

<sup>94</sup> Derrida, J. (1992). *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*. (Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Trans). Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 89.

<sup>95</sup> Marion, J.L. (2004) *The Crossing of the Visible* (James K.A. Smith, Tr.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

"...Each mode is a mode of giving presence to an absence that threads its way in every direction, a point on the front, a point on the back, upside down or inside out, and this absence in incessant absenting puts all the modes into contact at their borders; the same unidentifiable texture circulates everywhere. The relation of image to sense is the eternal return of the same. The same sense always imaged otherwise..."(Nancy, 2005:71).<sup>96</sup>

Derrida (1989) generally links reproduction, as a kind of repetition, to the problematics of the *pharmakon*. He depicts the problematics of writing as a variant of *pharmakon* by means of Plato's *Phaedrus*: Writing is presented to the king like a beneficial *pharmakon* because according to Thoth, it permits repetition and memory. But the king does not consider this *pharmakon* to be good for repetition: He believes that it isn't used to aid memory (*mneme*) but for re-memoration (*hypomnesis*). We may posit that replacing text by image or image by text is, according to the king's conception of repetition in text, a negative remedy. But, according to his logic, *pharmakon* is negative only if one of the modes of representation, text or image, remediates the others' fictionality. Forbidden drugs here are linked to the effectiveness of healing, as if the cure can be tested only by a remedy that contains truth. The question is, however, are texts or images – as *pharmakons* – purveyors of truth? Being unsure – while glancing at Magritte's *La Reproduction* – whether this rather than remediation is the case, what we attain is a constant state of dizziness, caused by the oscillation between repetition and memory, as if we were drugged. The literature has being accused of "being on drugs", says Avital Ronell (2004):

"...There are many reasons for pressing literature on the narcotics question, but these are not essential: we could have just as easily followed the trajectory of *Rausch*, the ecstasy of intoxication, through the work of Kant, Nietzsche and Heidegger on aesthetics. Or, guided by the philosophemes of forgetfulness, we could have traced the vertigo of the subject. Perhaps we would have arrived at the same results. Still, it is the case that the singular staging of the imaginary—"literature" in the widest sense—has a tradition of uncovering abiding structures of crime and ethnicity with crucial integrity; one need only think of what Hegel drew from *Antigone* or Freud from *Oedipus*

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<sup>96</sup> Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Jeff Fort, Tr.). New York: Fordham University Press.

*Rex*. These works have always worked as informants but they were nobody's fools – they talked to the philosophers because they had inside knowledge. So literature, which is by no means an innocent bystander but often the accused, a breeding ground of hallucinogenes, has something to teach us about ethical fractures and the relationship to law. Gustave Flaubert's book went to court; it was denounced as a poison..." (Ronell, 2004, 12).<sup>97</sup>

Much more than the accused, image as compared to text suffers from denigration, an attitude placing it in a no less needy situation, which calls for redemption from what the remedy – text – can offer the image in order to assist its falling too directly into its destiny as a secondary instance:

"...Regardless of the position one takes with respect to this forbidding of representation or, in a more general way, with respect to its religious contest, it must nonetheless be recognized that the iconoclastic interpretation involves a *condemnation* of images to the precise extent that it also presupposes a certain *interpretation* of the image: it must necessarily be thought of as a closed presence, one completed within its own order, opened onto thinking and by nothing other, and so isolated within a kind of "stupidness of the idol". Thus the image is degraded as secondary, as imitative and therefore as inessential, as derivative and lifeless, as deceitful and weak: nothing could be more familiar to us than this motif. In fact, for the duration of the West's history, this motif will have resulted from the alliance (and it is doubtless this that has so decisively marked the West as such) forged between the principle of monotheism and the Greek problematic of the copy or the simulation, of artifice and the absence of the original..." (Nancy, 2005, 31).<sup>98</sup>

In *La Reproduction Interdite*, text and image conform the starring couple that, by means of the mirror effect, remediates the one into the other as if one is a remedy for the other. *The Narrative's* hallucinations are grounded by the departure of the poet and the entrance of the seer. In *La Reproduction*, "*reproduction is forbidden*" but, because it still performs in any way possible, it changes reality's possibilities. In the painting, reversals in volatility and movement, causality and directionality propose virtuality.. Absence is mourned and celebrated, resembled, duplicated and dispersed, leaving translation and remediation as the two mirroring technologies assigned the task of perpetuating oscillation. These technologies are the dominant modes by which a

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<sup>97</sup> Ronell, A. (2004) *Crack Wars, Literature Addiction Mania*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>98</sup> Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Jeff Fort, Tr.). New York: Fordham University Press.

mirror can simultaneous play, by which it participates in installing, creating effects and constructing incredible compositions.

Remediation á la Magritte is played without withdrawal of mediation . Image (or painting) and text, *The Portrait* and *The Narrative*, seem to be well aware of the interplay of drugs and hallucinatory effects, of their constant oscillation. This oscillation installs an alternative ideality, originating beneath the real, and aiming toward creation of a space for virtuality. Again, this transformative technology presupposes Mirror's constant interplay. Once translating, once remediating, alternating time and velocity, the whirlpool of reflections crystallize text into image, image into text, text into text and image into image through mirroring.

### **3. 5 In the Whirlpool of Reflections**

Mise en abyme, metalepsis and chiasmus are textual devices that, by appearing and disappearing in *La Reproduction*, cause and reflect movement. The entire painting is repeated twice, as if the painting is responding to its model or, in other words, by placing part of the work en abyme in relation to the entire work. Painting the work's repetition as a mirror reflection is what generates a range of chiasmic reflections encompassing all the painting's parts, its actual and potential entourage, and converts it into an ever-changing figuration. Even those of the painting's parts that do not appear as mirror reflections in the work establish a criss-cross relationship that install chiasmus as the mechanism of *for-da* movement, which itself accelerates the interplay of these reflections. But neither mise en abyme nor chiasmus, by themselves, can independently activate the painting's interplay of reflections. Instead, we have *image positing*: The man with his back to the front imitates the seer and the narrative's reversals, positing Poe instead of Baudelaire and Baudelaire instead Poe. The three mirrors in one, what invites the seer and his surroundings to be included in the

painting, are what introduce metalepsis as a technology that transgresses and shakes up the painting's ontological, rhetorical and narrative levels.

Three types of figural mirrors – mise en abyme, metalepsis and chiasmus – are capable of interchanging effects, excluding the possibility of placing a chronological and causal order into their performance in the painting. The three figures mix in continual movement; these first begin shaking the painting's entire ontological nature as a posited and unmovable image, then question its originality, causality, narratives and the order and place of things in the world generally. Instead of stability and the frozen nature of the framed image, the *mirror's tryptich technology*, composed of mise en abyme, metalepsis and chiasmus, cause an *ilinx* (Greek for whirlpool) effect. As defined by Callois, *ilinx* as a kind of game that provokes vertigo. Callois finds *ilinx* in games, physical activities and moral attitudes that cause the pleasure drive for disorder and destruction, a drive that is normally repressed (Callois, 1961: 23-26).<sup>99</sup> This is why the order of appearance and presentation of each of the three mirroring figures – mise en abyme, metalepsis and chiasmus – starring in *La Reproduction* has no importance: Their performance in the text and the image, as well as between them, decomposes the painting's linear textual direction while reversing their before-after movement. No causal relationship exists between them. They simply mobilize a confusing machinery during the making/unmaking of imaginary and textual figures and the seer-like experience of seeing and reading.

### **3.6 The imaging mirror/mirror image in text: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym***

Mireille Hardy (1998) detects mirrored image oscillations of different types in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* as well as in *La Reproduction*

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<sup>99</sup> Callois, R. (1961) *Man, Play and Games*. New York: The Free Press, pp. 23-26.

*Interdite*; she questions whether these can be identified with Genette's comment about the French baroque as including symptoms of "vertigo which point toward a contradictory symmetry which creates conflict between the finished and the unfinished". Poe didn't "finish"; he left it oscillating between unity and multiplicity, *ad libidum*, with the text's repetitions serving as "comings backs", but never returning to the original point. This is one cause of the text's distortions of the real:

"...Cette distortion du reel est une stratégie d'écriture: la reproduction de l'expérience s'avère impossible et conduit a une flagrante impasse diegetique. La disparition du narrateur n'est ni une pirouette ni une maladresse, mais bien l'affirmation que la reproduction est interdite. Le récit de Pym est incomplet mais le roman est termine: le récit ne doit pas s'achever condamne a la blancheur définitive de la page (Ricardou) Représentation inconcevable, L'homme que l'on voit de dos sur le tableau de Magritte en est-il le narrateur invisible?..." (Hardy, 1998:139)<sup>100</sup>.

The issue of the identity of the man with his back turned to the seer<sup>101</sup> in *La Reproduction* implies Magritte's attempt to answer Poe's question, which could lead to our understanding of the Poe citation in the painting. But it is *Hardy's* reading of *Pym*

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<sup>100</sup> Hardy, M. (1998) "*La Reproduction Interdite, ecart entre vue et vision dans 'The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*".

<http://www.paradigme.com/sources/sources-pdf/Pages%20de%20Sources05-2-3.pdf>.

Translation by Micaela Kramer:

This distortion of the real is a writing strategy: the reproduction of experience is proved to be impossible, and this leads to a blatant diegetic impasse. The disappearance of the narrator is neither a pirouette nor a blunder; rather, it is the assertion that reproduction is forbidden. Pym's story is incomplete, but the novel is finished: the story should not be completed, condemned to the permanent whiteness of the page (Ricardou). Inconceivable representation; is the man whose back one sees on Magritte's painting the invisible narrator? (Hardy, 1998:139).

<sup>101</sup> Ricardou, J. (1976) 'The Singular Character of the Water', (Frank Towne, Tr.). *Poe Studies*, 9(1):1-6. Ricardou's interpretation to the man with the back toward the mirrors is as follows:

The observation that the astonishment of the whites faced with the liquid was as profound as that of Too-wit on the *Jane Guy*, when he saw the mirrors, does not seem to me fortuitous. It would have been the height of stupidity to represent as being frightened by his image a man who, in the valleys of his island, would have had a mirror of water regularly at his disposal. Thus the purpose of the [page 4:] apparent infusion of gum arabic where little declivity was found, the variation of the colors, and the mobile complication of the veins susceptible of being drawn apart is to rule out any possibility of reflection.

The remarkable conclusion to be drawn from this superficial connection is that, having no mirroring surface at their disposal, the islanders were not acquainted with their own images. Never having left their black homeland of the archipelago, they reject whiteness. Not being aware of the Same and the Other, that complementary pair, their universe is restricted, as it were, to an undifferentiated sameness.

that points to the variegated mirror figuration that could allude, instead, to relations based on playful correspondences between the two.

According to Hardy, the recurring figure of the mirror in Poe's works acquires in *The Narration* what Mallarme<sup>102</sup> baptizes as "*langage se réfléchissant*," a design for the impossible, for mirror writing. Other examples of re-flexibility in the text are: August messages written on reverse sides, anagrams (tsalal/atlas, Pym, imp), palindromes (dog/God), series of twins (Pym/Augustus, Pym/Peters) and similitude onomastiques (Poe/Pym, Allan/Allen). Hardy (1998) adds that it is also worth paying attention to polysemic words (considerations, reflections, speculations) that allude to the Shakespearian *mind's eye* and make gaze and imagination synchronic. All these reflective lexical games criss-cross one another, weaving a tissue of chiasmi that places the story into a state of perpetual instability.

Moreover, Hardy (1998) stresses that the image offered by Poe's mirrors is a monstrous representation. Adopting her view of *Pym's* mirrors from Jean-Jacques Lecercle (1989), she asserts that the ambiguity of *Mirror* is found in its alternation between constructing and deconstructing, as if it were revising the coherence of form:

"...Les signes grossiers destinés à tromper les mutins (le visage grime, le corps artificiellement gonfle pour imiter celui du noyé) suffisent à faire illusion dans l'obscurité. Mais Pym se regardant voit l'unheimlich remonter à la surface sous les signes. C'est dans la faille entre le réel (la mort du marin) et sa représentation que vient se loger le malaise de Pym: "At the recollection of the terrific reality which I was thus representing... I was seized with a violent tremor" (71). Pym refuse la représentation qu'il découvre car le reflet qui surgit est, celui d'un autre, monstrueux habitant d'un territoire refoulé, celui de la "fissure du sujet" (Barthes, 1975 5-6). À ce point extrême de représentation, le miroir ne révèle qu'une image fugitive, un écart, il montre l'ob-sène. Le sujet n'a plus sa place dans un miroir qui place l'humain "en outré" le fait sortir du cadre. Le miroir triche, truque le reflet, oblitère l'original, le fait passer au second plan et opère une transformation teratomorphe. La refraction dévient entrée par effraction

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<sup>102</sup> Magritte's thoughts on poetic painting were inspired by reading Mallarme as it appears in the different version of his definition of poetic painting. See in: Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecrits Complètes*, Andre Blavier (Ed.). Paris: Flammmrion, pp. 686-690.

dans le territoire terrifiant de l'inconscient: reproduction interdite, représentation inacceptable..." (Hardy, 1998:132).<sup>103</sup>

The systematic destruction of the image continues with Augustus, Pym's double, who disappears on the 1st of August (August echoing Augustus), at noon, at the moment that the boat passes the equator, that is, in the middle of the story, in the middle of the day and at the middle of the earth (see Chapter 13). Hardy stresses that if we accept such an underlying structure, we can begin to perceive experiential duplications throughout the novel. Betrayal and assault on *The Grampus*, betrayal and crime on Tsalal; the closing of Pym on the Grampus and on the Tsalal hills, the saving of Ariel's survivors by the Penguin and those of the Grampus by Jane Guy, the experience of hunger and drunkenness on the boat bridge. The last symmetry, a double closure of auteur and narrator, frames the story that opens with Pym's introduction, which is taken down by Poe as the events' narrator, and ends with Pym's disappearance, followed by the arrival of an anonymous note. These symmetries make inversion the rule, with reading done as if standing upside-down (Hardy, 1998).

In *The Narrative*, images are doubled; the unfinished text rests on the supposition that a mirror image is oscillating, introducing instability to text and image. The products,

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<sup>103</sup> Hardy, M. (1998) *La Reproduction Interdite, écart entre vue et vision dans "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym"*.

<http://www.paradigme.com/sources/SOURCES-PDF/Pages%20de%20Sources05-2-3.pdf>.

Translation by Micaela Kramer

The crude signs, aimed at fooling the mutineers (the made-up face, the body that is artificially swollen so as to resemble the body of a drowned person) suffice to fool people in the dark. But when looking at himself, Pym sees the unheimlich surface from underneath the signs. It is in the rift between the real (the sailor's death) and its representation that Pym's unease lodges itself: "at the recollection of the terrific reality which I was thus representing... I was seized with a violent tremor" (71) ...Pym refuses the representation he discovers, for what appears is someone else's reflection, the monstrous inhabitant of a repressed territory, that of the "fissure of the subject" (Barthes, 1975: 5-6).

At this extreme point of de-representation, the mirror reveals nothing but a fugitive image, a gap; it shows the ob-scene. The subject no longer has his/her place in a mirror where the human is placed "besides", and is removed from the frame. The mirror cheats; it fakes the reflection and obliterates the original, making the original pass for second-rate, operating a teratomorphic transformation. The deviant refraction that has broken into the terrifying territory of the unconscious: forbidden reproduction, unacceptable representation... (Hardy, 1998:132).

text and image, appear and disappear in front of the mirror, or pass through it to reappear itself as a questioned presence.

### **3.7 Resembling texts: *The Portrait of Edward James***

The book's front and back cover painting reflect only a part of the cover; in *La Reproduction*, mirror reflects text into image, and vice-versa, by a Magrittean resemblance gesture.

According to Magritte, *resemblance* in everyday language means that there is little difference and a great deal of similitude between two objects. *Identity* would then be the state between two things that are unlike, that are not characterized by relations of similarity. Semblance and similitude – and other relations – between separate things are elaborated by thought. Thought is not a relation but an action; in the present case, the action creates resemblance. Resembling is thus becoming the thing that thought brings forth.

Resemblance is therefore thought constituting itself, creating cognition of the world. However the possible actions associated with thought – meaning, coherent or incoherent actions – do not create a resemblance of the material world: These inessential actions compose a resemblance to a way of thinking. Resemblance is a thought that becomes immediate consciousness while leaving intact the richness and precision of the other terms gathered in the immediate consciousness. Immediate consciousness is modified constantly during sleeping and waking. The spontaneous order of immediate consciousness is confounded in order to submit to a way of thinking, whether coherent or incoherent. This domestication to a way of thinking creates a space like a lake, where a quiet – or raging – sky is passively reflected. The essential action of thought is the creation of resemblance, an act that comprehends conscience/conscious terms and then spontaneously reassembles them:

"...Painting is familiarly called "the art of resemblance". But a painted image cannot resemble. Only thought can resemble. Thought can resemble a painted image only by becoming the consciousness of a painted image..." (Magritte, 2003).

Resembling, more than a designation to associative and spontaneous thought, is etymologically linked to *semblance*, meaning phantasm or apparition. The Magrittean re-semblance thus reminds us of Derrida's explanation of the term *specter* in his lecture "Specters of Marx" (1994), where he suggests that the figure of the specter can be articulated in relation to a moment of Husserlian phenomenology (the *noeme*) that is neither real ("in' the world'") nor a component of subjectivity ("in' consciousness") but which constitutes the "condition of any experience, any objectivity, any phenomenality".<sup>104</sup> In contrast, the art of resembling in *La Reproduction* vivifies phantasms and apparitions by applying the Magrittean figural vocabulary, which displaces objects and subjects from their usual use and context to create a new scene where they are strangerized and then re-familiarized not only as objects and subjects but as possibilities of knowledge and visualization.

Magritte, well aware of the history of Mirror in art – as he himself writes to Foucault – describes thought's power to resemble among the flux of movements shifting between images of reflections and reflections on images:

"...Only thought resembles. It resembles by being what it sees, hears, or knows; it becomes what the world offers it.

It is completely invisible as pleasure or pain. But painting imposes a problem: There is the thought that sees and can be visibly described. *Las Meninas* is the visible image of Velasquez's invisible thought. Then is the invisible sometimes visible? On one condition, that thought be constituted exclusively of visible images.

On this topic, it is evident that a painted image—intangible by its very nature—hides nothing, while the tangibly visible object [can] hides another visible thing—if we trust our experience.

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<sup>104</sup> Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx: State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (Peggy Kamuff, Tr.). London: Routledge.

For some time, a curious priority has been accorded "the invisible," owing to a confused literature, whose interest vanishes if we remember the visible can be hidden, but the invisible hides nothing; it can be known or not known, no more. There is no reason to accord more importance to the invisible than to the visible, nor vice versa. What does not "lack" importance is the mystery invoked *in fact* by the visible and the invisible, and which can be evoked in principle by the thought that unites "things" in an order that evokes mystery..." (Rene Magritte in a letter to Michel Foucault, May 23, 1966 in Magritte, 2001: 639).<sup>105</sup>

The thought that unites things in an order that evokes mystery in *La Reproduction* calls for thinking on the reflexivity alluded to, among other things, by the inclusion of Poe's reflective, oscillating text and his conversation with that text in the painting as well as by the variety of reflections appearing in the painting itself. It is through the interweaving of textual mechanisms such as *mise en abyme*, *metalepsis* and *chiasmus* that the reflecting and fluctuating resemblance of the painting is cognized and configured.

### **3.8 Installing the Mirror: *Mise en abyme***

In the middle of the painting, Magritte installs a second painting, reflecting the first, by way of a mirror. But we see only a portion of the figures reflected back in the painted mirror: part of the young man's back, part of the shelf and part of a book.

Installing a mirror (or a shield in the middle of a text or a painting) was suggested by Gide and studied by Lucien Dallenbach (1988) evokes the mechanism of *mise en abyme*. Gide found this phenomenon to have anterior and posterior functions other than those performed by "the play within the play" in *Hamlet*. The mirror serves to close the work of art within itself by means of a self-referential gesture, as if by inserting a miniature of one of its parts it could evade the art-nature dichotomy and reflect *ad infinitum* on its autonomy and closure. Moreover, rather than showing its

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<sup>105</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) *Lettres a Michel Foucault* in Magritte, R. *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets* (Andre Blavier, Ed.). Paris: Flammmrion, p. 639.

own principles of construction, the mirror repeats and fractures some of the figures appearing in the painting. This is how these figures are put into a state of refraction or *mise en écart* (Ropars, M.C, 1998),<sup>106</sup> thereby setting them apart. By stressing the figures' passage we witness the transition from "*mise on abyme*" to "*mise en écart*". Thus, the reflexive process is shown to be other than a straightforward affair of the subject seeing itself in its representations. It is as if the subject that is seen – *différent* to use Derrida's term – is the subject seeing. There is a slight shift, *un léger décalage*, between the subject and the representation of itself that mirrors – if one may still use such a metaphor –thereby reveals the operation of alterity – the workings of *différance* – at the heart of subjectivity.

Thus, two modalities of *mise en abyme* perform and are performed in *La Reproduction*: The "paradoxal" or "aphoristic" (Minnemann & Schlickers, 2004)<sup>107</sup> *mise en abyme*, meaning a fragment of the work is included in the work included by it; taken in unison, these "insertions" create a *mise en abyme* that endlessly projects itself. This is why it is difficult to know whose thought is the one that, by resembling, creates the painting: Is it the painter's or are the seer's thought? The never-ending fluctuation back and forward, effectuated by the mirror, could allow the supposition that reflecting and reflected figures interchange and confound the roles assigned to the seer and the seen.

### **3.9 Mixing *The Portrait* and *The Narrative*: Chiasming Metalepsis, "Metalepsing" Chiasmus**

In "Metaleptic Machines,"<sup>108</sup> Marie-Laure Ryan brings forth the following example:

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<sup>106</sup> Ropars-Wuilleumier, M.C. (1998) *L'Idée d'image*. Vincennes: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes.

<sup>107</sup> Minnemann, K, M.& Schlickers, S. (2004) *La mise en abyme en narratologie*, *Vox Poetica*:

<http://www.vox-poetica.org/t/menabyme>.

<sup>108</sup> Ryan, M.L. (2006) *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.

"...A classic example of ontological metalepsis is the short story by Woody Allen, "The Kugelmass Episode". In this story, the hero visits a psychoanalyst who offers to solve his problems by transporting him by means of a special machine into the world of the novel of his choice. Kugelmass selects Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and he begins a love affair with the heroine. This greatly upsets the literature professors of the Ivy League, for when they open the book to discuss it in class, they find Emma Bovary making love to a New York Jew instead of eloping with Rodolphe or Léon. Through the metaleptic operation, the imaginary Emma has migrated into the fictionally real world of Kugelmass, and the fictionally real Kugelmass has migrated into what is from his point of view the imaginary world of *Madame Bovary*. Should we say that Emma becomes real when she visits New York in the primary fictional world, or that Kugelmass becomes fictional when he visits Emma in the France of Flaubert's novel?..." (Ryan, 2006: 208).

But it was Gerard Genette (2005:22)<sup>109</sup> who globally defined *metalepsis* as a permutation but specifically as the use of one word for another, a mechanism that alters the word's original signification. Genette also reminds us that this is the Greek sense of the word and that in the absence of precision, this definition of *metalepsis* becomes a synonym for *metaphor* and *metonymy*: *Metaphor*, says Genette, grounding his definition on Dumarsais and Fontanier<sup>110</sup>, is limited by tradition to analogies made by transfer, while the equivalence existing between metalepsis and metonymy dissipates by constraining the first to a consecution of the latter. It is in Dumarsais's chiasmus, cited by Genette, that we find metalepsis as a chiasmus between "before" and "after" and, of course, "after" and "before":

...La metalepse est une espèce de (la) metonymie, par laquelle on explique ce qui suit pour faire entendre ce qui precede, ou ce qui precede pour faire entendre ce qui suit... (Genette, 2005:22).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Genette, G. (2005) *De la figure a la fiction* in *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*, John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds.). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. 21-35.

<sup>110</sup> Dumarsais, C. (1967) Ch. Les Tropes (*Les Tropes de Dumarsais avec un commentaire raisonne... par M. Fontanier*, 1818). Geneve: Slatkine Reprints; Fontanier, P. (1968) *Les Figures du discours* (1830). Paris: Flammarion.

<sup>111</sup> Genette, G. (2005) De la figure a la fiction. *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*. John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds.). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. 21-35.

Translation by Micaela Kramer:

"...Metalepsis is a form of metonymy by which one explains either what follows in order to understand what precedes, or what precedes in order to understand what follows..." (Genette, 2005:22)

Despite the lengthy history<sup>112</sup> that metalepsis bears from its rhetorical performances, we should not wonder that this term has crept into the theory of fiction and narratology just at the time when "fictional immersion"<sup>113</sup> has become part not only of literature but of daily life. The term has come to refer not to Baudrillard's simulacra alone, but to the situation where, for instance, millions of people are immersed in fiction, creating a "Second Life"<sup>114</sup> and the other "lives rested to live" while playing video or computer games in a style and density never seen before.

Cortazar's *Continuity of Parks* is brought as an example by many of the members of the "Narrative Metalepsis" investigating team in order to figurate the scandal of metalepsis.<sup>115</sup> Killing the reader as in the *Continuity of Parks*, killing the actress as in Cortazar's *We Love Glenda So Much*, being murdered by the book as in Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, can all be considered the vengeance of Cortazar or Eco. Both are "hyperbolizing" a Poeian attitude, as if responding to the author's disappearance legitimates the reader's death at the hands of the story writer.

The transition from diegesis to meta-diegesis (and vice versa) is only one of the examples of metalepsis as a figurative and textual mechanism that causes the representational pact to tremble. According to John Pier and Jean-Marie-Schaeffer,<sup>116</sup> metalepsis has the power to influence communication while producing a kind of

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<sup>112</sup> For some historic metalepsis "miles stones" see: Roussin, Ph. (2005) *Rhetorique de la metalepse, etats de cause, typologie, recit Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*, John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. 38-58.

<sup>113</sup> See: Schaeffer, J.M. (2005) Metalepse et immersion fictionnelle. *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*, John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds.). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. 323-334; Ryan, M.L. (2006) *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 97-204.

<sup>114</sup> See <http://secondlife.com>.

<sup>115</sup> Schaeffer, J.M. (2005) Metalepse et immersion fictionnelle. *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*. John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds.). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. xx-xx.

<sup>116</sup> Schaeffer, J.P & J.M. (2005) Introduction. *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*. (Eds. John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. 12-14.

permeability between narratives. The same results are obtained when using metalepsis as a way of making the narrative communication contract more complex or by transforming the textual organization of the story and its interpretative possibilities. Ontological metalepsis (Ryan, 2005)<sup>117</sup> folds narrative levels one into the other, thus confounding the distinction between the telling and the told.

By contrasting – or at least questioning – the use of metaphor in order to specify a relationship on the paradigmatic (selection) and the metonymic axes for the purpose of specifying relationships that develop at the horizontal axis (combination), metalepsis causes a "court-circuit" in discourse organization:

"... comme le disait Fontanier, elle consiste à "substituer l'expression indirecte à l'expression directe" ou que, dans l'esprit de Quintilien, elle importe un synonyme impropre dans un contexte donné, soit enfin que, selon la topologie freudienne, elle représente une "déformation" (*Entstellung*) par rapport à la "condensation" (*Verdichtung*) métaphorique et au "déplacement" (*Verschiebung*) métonymique..." (Schaeffer, 2005: 13-14)<sup>118</sup>.

Metalepsis seems to stress the frustrated corollary of Coleridge's formulation "the voluntary suspension of credulity" or "ironic function" since she (la metalepse) grounds a reading contract that is less based on verosimilarity than on a shared knowledge of illusion (Schaeffer, 2005: 14)<sup>119</sup>.

Georges Roque,<sup>120</sup> who studied metalepsis in some of Magritte works, found that in many metaleptic paintings, Magritte paints objects, subjects and animals not in order

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<sup>117</sup> Ryan, M.L. (2006) *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 97-204.

<sup>118</sup> Schaeffer, J.P. & J.M. (2005) Introduction. *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la représentation*. John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds.). Paris: Edition de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales, pp. 12-14.

Translation by Micaela Kramer:

"... as Fontanier would say, it consists in "substituting the indirect expression for the direct one"; or, in the spirit of Quintilian: it imports an improper synonym into a given context; or, finally, according to the Freudian topology, it represents a "deformation" (*Entstellung*) in relation to metaphorical "condensation" (*Verdichtung*) and to metonymical "displacement"... (Schaeffer, 2005: 13-14).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

to represent them but in order to transform them. Magritte does so because classic forms of representation makes us believe that representation is a mimetic mode; what Magritte proposes is that the model be the painting's consequent, not its antecedent. Georges Roque remarks that the Magritte's reversal of painting and background as studied in Art History is based on an intuition by Jonathan Culler that associates the metalepsis idea to a Nietzschean idea, linked to chronological reversal (*die chronologische Umdrehung*). Culler quotes a paragraph entitled "The Phenomenology of the Internal World", where the argument is made that the internal world is a fragment of the external world in which we become conscious of what comes after an effect has been produced on us. Yet, in that internal world, that same effect is projected as its own "cause". Culler stresses that the concept of structural causality is produced by a rhetorical operation that he links with metalepsis.<sup>121</sup> In this sense, similar to Roque (2005: 270-273), Magritte is closer to the Deleuze of the "Logic of Sense", for whom paradox is neither nonsense nor a contradiction but the passion of thinking, of discovering what cannot be thought. After all, it was Magritte himself who often asserted that his painting was his imaged thought and not a paradoxal view of the world.

Much like Paul de Man (1979: 20-56)<sup>122</sup> in his study on Rilke, Magritte offers an alternative world that, with the help of Mirror in its guise as a "chiasmic machine", displaces the usual relationship between language and imagination and re-installs a new relationship. Language and the represented real world are thereby decomposed

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<sup>120</sup> Roque, G. (2005) *Sous le signe de Magritte. Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*. John Pierre & Jean-Marie Schaefer (Eds.). Paris: Edition de l'escole des hautes etudes en sciences sociales, pp. 263-276.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270; Culler, J. (1982) *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 86-87.

<sup>122</sup> de Man, P. (1979) *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, pp. 20-56.

through a series of reversals through which signification is either postponed or reaching toward virtual possibilities.

The missing eyes in *La Reproduction*, *The Portrait of Edward James*, are like Apollo's missing eyes in Rilkes' "*Archaischer Torso Apollos*". According to de Man, this is what allows the mirror to be the one object that stares like a large, unique eye. The observer is then transformed into the observed. Reversal is possible due to the whole-part chiasmus and the void left by the missing eyes. Reversal destabilizes the usual functioning of the language–image relationship; chiasmus thus returns to language – though temporarily – the possibility of reflection. Reversal also generates a movement of vertiginous repetitions that are counter-pointed by Magritte's seemingly calm and hyperrealistic design, creating an effect of reality and quietude. Destabilization, the counter-point between the usual sense of things and their reverse, is part of Magrittean imaginary and even ideological view of the world:

"...People who look for symbolic meanings no doubt sense this mystery (the mystery of the image DSK) but they want to get rid of it. They are afraid. By asking "what does this mean?" they express a desire for everything to be understandable. But if one does not reject the mystery, one has quite a different response. One asks other things. A poet friend of mine, for example, when he first saw *L'aimable vérité*, said: "For a moment, I was struck by panic. It is precisely this moment of panic which counts and not any explanation of it. I am repatriated by a moment of panic. These are the privileged moments that transcend mediocrity. But for that there doesn't have to be art-it can happen at any moment..." (Magritte 2001:645-647).<sup>123</sup>

Yet, even though Magritte reversed the image-to-text and text-to-image relationship – effected between the title and the painting and between the book's cover text by Poe and the chiasmi between this and other texts in addition to the *n* images in *La Reproduction*, he clearly confined written poetry to those works that dealt with words:

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<sup>123</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) Interview with Suzi Gablik in *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets*, Andre Blavier (ed.). Paris: Flammmrion, pp 686.

"...La poesie n'exprime ni des sentiments ni des idées. Mallarme, ne disait-il pas: "Ce n'est pas avec des idées et des sentiments que l'on fait de la poesie, c'est avec des mots..." (Magritte, 2001, 686)<sup>124</sup>

Nevertheless, even if it seems that Magritte opted to transform poetry into images, he problematized the relationship between written and painted poetry by painting words and even writing down his thoughts:

"...La poesie écrite est invisible, la poesie peinte une apparence visible. Le poète, qui écrit, pense avec des mots familiers, et le poète qui peint, pense avec des figures familières du visible, l'écriture est une description invisible de la pensée de... la peinture est en (sic pour: en est.) la description visible.

Je ne me soucie que de la peinture poétique, qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec une peinture littéraire, qui, elle, s'occupe d'idées et de sentiments, en utilisant leurs pseudo representations que sont les symbols conventionnels ..."(Magritte, 2001:686).<sup>125</sup>

After comparing the use of reversal in Magritte's painting and writings with Paul de Man's view of Rilke's poetry, and adding de Man's assertion about chiasmus, we are free to consider a certain loss of substance as the element that triggers the unlimited play of rhetorical reversals in the Rilke and the Magritte oeuvres. Doing so makes it possible to contend that reflection is more real than reality in their work. The resemblances of a mirrored yet obstructed portrait – not a reproduction – acquire a certain linearity by inverting chiasmus, that is, by throwing into the distance the

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<sup>124</sup> Magritte, R. (2001) *Rene Magritte, Ecris Complets*, Andre Blavier (Ed.). Paris: Flammmrion, p. 686.

Translation by Micaela Kramer:

"...Poetry expresses neither feelings nor ideas. Didn't Mallarme say: "It isn't with ideas of feelings that one writes poetry, but with words..."

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p.686

Translation by Micaela Kramer:

"...Written poetry is invisible, painted poetry has a visible appearance. The poet who writes, thinks with familiar words, and the poet who paints, thinks with familiar figures of the visible. Writing is an invisible description of thinking of... and painting is its visible description.

I care only about poetic painting, which one must not confuse with a literary painting. The latter concerns itself with ideas and feelings, and does so through the pseudo-representations of such ideas and feelings, which are the conventional symbols..."

projections and reflecting movements, the backward and forward. The figure of Edward James projects what has been left behind as an ultimate farewell to the lost face and eyes (the obstructed figure seen from behind), which stresses the mirror's role as an artifact that supplements sight, that compensates for the transcendental "ruin of the eye" that threatens and seduces (sight) from the original (Derrida 1992: 69)<sup>126</sup>. Later, Derrida explains that in his view, what is possible to apply to Magritte's mirror, as an effect of the lost direct intuition that is the hypothesis of the gaze:

"...It takes the place of the gaze before all instrumentalization, close as possible from the eye, like a lens made of animal matter. It immediately stands out, as immediately detachable from the body proper and this from the very beginning: the modern history of optics only represents or points out in new ways a weakness of what is called natural sight..." (Derrida, 1992: 70)<sup>127</sup>.

The mirror mediates between the limitations of natural sight and the mourning of sight's finitude, which invites the effort to see further and closer than the eye sees. The mirror is installed where natural sight cannot see, diffusing or concentrating one's gaze, playing with all these possibilities by closing and opening the potentiality imminent in visibility's positions. The mediating functionality of Magritte's mirror reveals not what is seen in the mirror but the mirror's promise to produce and reproduce the possibility of a man seeing himself as an eternal figure, one that sees only himself as capable of seeing or staring, as if being oblivious to others outside himself is part of his very nature. Thus, as opposed to Narcissus who is blind to anyone but himself, Magritte's Edward James is blind only to himself. By eliminating James' sight, possibility is mysteriously returned to the painting's seer and visibility is re-installed within the object.

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<sup>126</sup> Derrida, J. (1992) *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Tr.). Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 89.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

But what kind of sight is rendered? It is a sight drawn toward mystery, as if becoming a seer again endows the possibility of scrying, of divinating in mirrors more than knowing by them, of grasping more than temporal stances, of perhaps even trying to bridge between the familiar visible world and resemblances of thought.

Once mirror has activated chiasmus in *La Reproduction* and confused seer and seen, reflector and reflected, a chiasmic oscillation extends to all the painting's figures: Each reflects and is reflected by the other. Reproduction, understood as a redundant process, is negated in this way, with every repetition reproduced according to a sinecdochical fluctuation whose rhythm shows only part of what it reflects. This reversal from the whole to its parts and from its parts to the whole negates positive movement toward optimal sight or the hierarchical status of sight versus what is seen; it maintains the tension between wondering and resembling.

In *La Reproduction* as in Magritte's other paintings, the painter intimates completion of the painted figures despite the impression that the painting has been completed. But the painting is a model to construct; it invites another glance, an active glance that aims to seemingly fill what has rested empty but which repeats the conduction driven by the observer's action. *La Reproduction Interdite* thus represents only half – his back – of its main character, Edward James. This painting is like "*Collective Invention*" (1933)<sup>128</sup>, the painting of a hybrid figure, displaying a fish's head and a woman's legs. This is not a woman, nor a fish nor a siren, instead, it implies a model to be constructed that includes these three possibilities at the least.

Magritte's, like my own inquiry into the whole-parts chiasmus is accentuated by the before-after metaleptical temporality, captured by positing the figure of a man as a reversed portrait. The man with his back to the painting's front confounds the seer

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<sup>128</sup> Magritte, R. (1935) *Collective Invention*. Private Collection.

because this pose prevents the seer from know with any surety whether the man is entering the scene or passing through. In parallel, another mirror reflects a book cover as reflected in a reversing side mirror, seen as a reflection's reflection. The criss-cross movement between the figures in the painting, reflected in two different mirrors, extends the possibilities and varieties of sight. For it is the eyeless figure of the man that reverses the common functions holding between eye and mirror. It is the mirror that creates an anamorphic vision of the world in which one mirror accelerates time and the other decelerates it, with the two then conforming a third mirror that includes all the possible temporalities and therefore all the possible modalities of sight. The decelerated perspective, that is, the perspective coming from the past, figures the book cover as if reflected by a normal mirror that only reverses sides, returns the distant specters, bringing back the tradition of the doubling, literal function of the mirror – translating sides (*translatus*) – as a technology of reproduction.

Alternatively, the accelerating figure, which introduces the perspective of forward passage, introduces temporal oscillation or doubt regarding the figure's presence. In this way Mirror represents passage, it is chiasmus in action among mirroring figures passing one into the other and the one as the other, partly repeating themselves ad infinitum. Chiasmus can thus operate or pass between text and image:

"...What Image shows, Text de-monstrates. It withdraws it in justifying it. What text exposes, Image posits; What Image configures, Text disfigures. What the latter envisages, the former faces down (*devisage*). What one paints, the other depicts. But precisely that, their common cause and their common thing (*chose*), oscillates distinctly between the two in a paper-thin space: recto the text, verso the image, or vice (image)-versa (text)..." (Nancy, 2005, 78)<sup>129</sup>.

By including painted images and words in his painting, Magritte concentrates both mediums in close proximity, but far enough away from each other to be differentiated by the reflected effect of the image in the text and the text in the image. Magritte

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<sup>129</sup> Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (Jeff Fort, Tr.). New York: Fordham University Press.

plays with figures and figurations in a way that not only transforms image but transforms the possibility of language, painted and written, while weaving and unweaving signification.

Paul de Man, who had studied Rilke's poetry among that of others in his *Allegories of Reading*, was found by Avital Ronell (2002: 97-146)<sup>130</sup> to be working at the limits of technology:

"...In a way, de Man has translated and reinscribed the notion advanced by Heidegger that technology's essence is disclosed in its movements/moments of breakdown....The primacy of the mechanical does violence both to meaning and to the body and language..." (Ronell 2002: 98-99).

According to Ronell, part of this violence resides in the stupefying repetitiveness demanded by mechanicity and the cognitive daze that it spreads. This not only means that the performative dimension of the text is at odds with its stated cognition but that a random or mechanical aspect of language exists that "cannot be assimilated to a system of intentions, desires and motives" (Ronell 2002: 98-99)<sup>131</sup>.

Magritte immerses himself in the creation of technology. He centers and confounds a mirror technology by closing and disclosing the mirror's history and modalities.<sup>132</sup> In *Allegories of Reading*, de Man identifies chiasmus as the determining figure of Rilke's poetry, as the criss-crossing technology that reverses the attributes of words and of things in his work. By using language as a toy or a game, entities, objects and subjects are composed. These same entities, objects and subjects behave like words; they play at language according to the rules of rhetoric as one who plays soccer according to the rules of the game – but also at the limits of those respective rules. Thus, it is possible to treat chiasmus as generating and generated by the play that oscillates between ludus

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<sup>130</sup> Ronell, A. (2002) *Stupidity*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> "The mechanistic element, moreover, does not decide anything: every painting implies a mechanics".

Marion, J.L. (2004) *The Crossing of the Visible* (K. A. Smith, Tr.). Stanford: University of California Press. P. 17.

(a strictly ruled game) and paidia (a goal-free game) at the game–play level (Callois, 1961)<sup>133</sup>. At the linguistic level, this is done by installing a mirror in the text. In the case of *La Reproduction*, Mirror is introduced into images. Visual language is waved about by interweaving ludus and paidia, once by conserving rigid and sober figures of things and once by twisting some detail into those figures, disconnecting the usual sense of the word from its figural representation.

Rilke in some of his poems like Magritte in some of his paintings advocates a conception of language that excludes all subjective and intersubjective dimensions. De Man, when referring to Rilke, declares this paradox as not due to bad faith but as inherent in the ambivalence of poetic language. In the poetic space, a hyper-chiasmus takes place, enveloping within itself all types of polarities; this is the chiasmus between figuration and signification that can only come into being as a result of the void that allows for the rotating motion of those polarities. According to de Man, Rilke's entire strategy is to let the poetic meaning be carried by the rhetorical and the phonic dimensions of language. The "track" of the meaning and the "turn" of the tropes have to be reconciled by a virtuosity that acquires the graceful ease of apparent freedom. Once this point has been reached, Rilke – like Magritte – celebrates the new relationship to the world that figuration has revealed.

Learning from these ideas, we can speculate that "mise en abyme" and chiasmus indeed have opposite effects than those caused by Mirror's use as a technology, recognized primarily as reproducing dispositifs. Not only does Mirror acquire a broader signification and application, but *Reproduction* escapes its Marxist interpretation as tragic redundancy, as repetition of the production of copies of copies in an explicit and deterministic way.

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<sup>133</sup> Callois, R. (1961) *Man, Play and Games* (Meyer Barash, Tr.). New York: The Free Press, pp. 3-129.

Another possibility of studying chiasmus is through Merleau Ponty's interpretation of "the chiasm" between visible and invisible. This consideration adds the possibility of seeing chiasmus or chiasm as causing contact between the painting and what is not seen on it. In other words and in our case, it offers the possibility of seeing Edward James in Magritte's painting as a figuration of the visible–invisible relationship. For him, the invisible is not what is hidden but what appears "doubled with a complementary vision or with another vision: myself seen from without, such as another would see me, installed in the midst of the visible, occupied in considering it from a certain spot" (Merleau Ponty, 2004: 252). This possibility of seeing the invisible releases the very possibility of exactitude and determination for if reverse movement is taking place, questions of rhythm and orbit awaken a transformative reflection that questions right and presumably correct yet distorted ways of seeing relationships.

To Merleau Ponty, to seers, invisibility is the objective vision of themselves as seers for, he argues, our body is composed by two leaves:

"...We say therefore that our body is a being of two leaves, from one side a thing among things and otherwise what sees them and touches them; we say, because it is evident, that it unites these two properties within itself, and its double belongingness to the order of the "object" and the order of the "subject" reveals to us quite unexpected relations between the two orders. It cannot be that the body has this double reference; it teaches us that each calls for the other. For if the body is a thing among things, it is so in a stronger and deeper sense than they: in the sense that we said, it is *of them*, and this means that it detaches itself upon them, and accordingly, detaches itself from them. It is not simply a thing seen in fact (I do not see my back), it is visible by right, it falls under a vision that is both ineluctable and deferred..." (Merleau Ponty 2004: 254).

Precisely shown from his back by a mirror, the portrait of Edward James is a resembled thought about the possibility of mirrors being devices for mediating sight, for showing the apparition of the possibility of seeing or reflecting a figure in a

reversed position despite the human eye's physical limitations. Mirror thus appears as an autonomous device that extends human sight, that enable one to see herself seeing. Mirror also multiplies a version of sight infinitely chiasming, extending vision into the realm of seeing in a reversed way, of seeing the visible in the invisible.

This imagined figure of Edward James plays with the idea of two men whose back torsos are performing, are passing through our field of vision. By means of reciprocal chiasmus, the two images are interchanged with the painting's seer, who is swallowed by the painting. This can come about because the distance between the painting and the painted world is obstructed by the act of staring at the painting, which converts the seer into part of the painted world. At the moment that she sees herself, the "seer" departs. If seeing is linked to being, being, as in the blink of an eye, is linked to the perception of passage and temporality.

The anamorphic picturing of life as passage has been studied through Holbein's *Ambassadors* that, however, concentrates more on the idea of Men's Vanity.

Magritte's *La Reproduction*, with its seemingly less anamorphic figuration as enhanced by mirrors, is more intent on the theme of passage, installing anamorphosis between the visible and the invisible.

Olivier Douville (2005),<sup>134</sup> who considers anamorphosis as a sovereign accident opposing the enigma of seeing to a prescribed mimesis in every painting, has stressed that it is also a kind of *fort da* between the active and the passive position. This is a game existing in the pulse of time between seeing and being seen, a game that questions the entire psychology of seeing. The anamorphic stain swallows its seer. A visual derangement captures the seer and installs a game between the painting's detail and its whole. The internal menace in anamorphosis opposes the vampirized

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<sup>134</sup> Douville, O. (2005) D'un au-delà de la métaphore ou lorsque l'anamorphose brise l'allégorie. *Figures de la Psychoanalyse*, 11, 105-130.

conventional triumph of representation. This molestation does not ruin or totally vampirize the order of details. By hollowing out the painted image, it maintains the tension in the entire painting.

The criss-crossing of these two mirrored figures, Edward James and his double, then creates a disconcerting phenomenon that takes on a never-answered conundrum:

Which mirror reproduces what? Which reproduces reality and which reproduces the surreal? Does it play with reality-reproducing possibilities? A unifying mirror concept might assign concentrating on the mirror's omnipotent power.

Mirrors reproduce different kind of figures in different ways: "If we think of the operation in reverse, and it doesn't matter which kind of reverse, the mirror is projecting the aberration of natural forms" (Baltrusaitis, 1976). Baltrusaitis argues that visionaries of all times must have enjoyed these transfigurations, which reveal the fantastic. The corrections observed in the mirror, wherein true forms are reborn from chaos, also possess this supernatural element. The forms no longer reappear on a smooth surface but in an infinite depth that is revealed simultaneously in the dazzle of a metallic reflection. The image springs into life. It moves, it changes at the slightest shift of our gaze. It evolves into a fairyland realm where all things are simultaneously here yet inaccessible (Baltrusaitis, 1976).

Marion explains the moment of combination between the "real seen" and the "imaginary seen" as playing between two extremes of intentionality: the lived experiences (*vécus*), perceptions, founded (*éprouves*) and real on the one hand, and the aimed-at intentional object seen invisibly and ideally on the other. The gaze, which exercises the phenomenological function of intentionality in order to see the ultimate object by way of these experiences, interprets the sensible, visible object as unreal but accomplished. Intentionality therefore sees its objects through the lived

experience (*le vécu*), a perspective that crosses the visible with the invisible in order to see more. The gaze, in both cases, sees in depth.

Perspective in the painting manages to see the traversal per se only so long as a painting is unable to see itself as such. It is the blindness of the painting to itself, or its chiasmatic unreflectiveness, which introduces the very possibility of a painting.

According to Marion, without the work of the invisible, what we perceive as visible actually would offer only a rhapsodic spectacle and confusion of colored spots. In fact, in Marion view, a painting – before being a battle horse, a nude woman or any particular thing – is essentially a flat surface covered with colors in a designated order. Therefore, to transform this flat surface covered with color from a merely physical object into an effectively perceived given (*donnée effectivement perçue*), into a cavalry charge or what have you—that is to say, in order simply to see what is there to be seen—the visible must be constituted (see above) by taking form against the background of the invisible. Every painting presents, in fact, an anamorphosis: The real given and actually perceived has no form so long as the gaze does not find the conditions and the point of view from which it can take shape for the first time. The anamorphosis as a complex perspective or as a simplified anamorphosis—attests to the fact that only the invisible makes the visible possible by informing it, by crossing over (transversing) the flatness of the real painting, though without ever existing, in view of the spectacle targeted by the visible gaze. Mirrors in painting perform and "talk" about these movements of the visible into the invisible within the composition and decomposition of what we stare at and finally see (Marion, 2004: 1-24).<sup>135</sup>

Reproducing remediation through the triptych technology of the mirror

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<sup>135</sup> Marion, J.L. (2004) *The Crossing of the Visible* (K. A. Smith, Tr.). Stanford: University of California Press, pp. 1-24.

Mirrors in Magritte's *La Reproduction* intensify anamorphosis in a specific way. By swallowing the seer, *Reproduction* is transformed into a figure. This figure of imitation, by vertiginous movement, uninstalls the model's portrait and opens the space to the generalization of a clear and pristine image that again and again figurates the fragility of presence, the temporality of temporality and the specter of spectral reproduction.

It appears, then, that even before Jonathan Crary (1992)<sup>136</sup> asserted that the camera obscura had a discursive identity, mirror represented an *assemblage* in Deleuze's terms: "Mirror then will be a simultaneously and inseparably machinic assemblage and an assemblage of enunciation", an object about which something is said and at the same time an object that is used.<sup>137</sup> More than any other optical prosthesis, Mirror is not univocal as its traces in history point once to something and at the same point to its opposite. A mirror can be a technology to truly see but also to create a distorted image of reality.

This very oscillation between the supposed high fidelity of mirror image – as one possibility for the reproduction of images – and the media employed to attain them as opposed to the distorted image also obtained by the use of mirrors, raises questions about right/wrong images, right/wrong ways of seeing and right/ wrong mirrors.

These possibilities are questioned and, in a way, answered in *La Reproduction* for once the reproduction is produced, *mise en abyme*, *chiasmus* and *metalepsis*, as part of the mirror triptic technology, effectuates the reversal of time, of narrative level, of chronology, of direction, of causality, of reader and writer, of picture and painter, of writer and translator or, in other words, of the inversion of creator and observer.

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<sup>136</sup> Crary, J. (1992) *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

<sup>137</sup> Deleuze, G. Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Brian Massumi (Tr.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hence, no straight answer is available to the question "what is a 'good' mirror" in the sense of fidelity of reflection, or in any sense at all. Reflection seems not to perfectly imitate what is reproduced. The reproduced image is constantly transformed and the accelerated rhythm of the mirror whirlpool in *La Reproduction* alludes to a movement that proposes constant transposition of the order of things.

An essay meant to observe a whirlpool movement will not stop the vertigo aroused from elliptically rotating texts and images, aided by the transformative technology – the mirror – through which chiasmic and metaleptical movement is made possible. Alternatively, chiasmus is the movement that propels metaleptical effects, the unidirectionality of causality. The Thing inside the Thing no longer rests in quietude: *mise en abyme* acquires movement and velocity. The whirlpool either swirls or doesn't exist; the machinic of Mirror proposed by Magritte in *La Reproduction* causes *mise en abyme*, chiasmus and metalepsis to act in confusion, precisely as Dorrit Cohn asserts (Cohn, 2005:126)<sup>138</sup>. They are in effect con-fused; if we follow the original Latin, "*fundare*" means grounded, stabilized, found together and thus mixed up. The Thing inside the Thing, its reflection and the order of one vis-à-vis the other are confounded together into a technology of constant reproduction, never in the same orbit, always changing rhythm and, by modalities such as the volatility of change, weaving a modifying and a modified repetition. Neither the waters nor the mirrors can sparkle otherwise. Light and shadow, wind and air currents vary the angles and perspectives of reflection and its reversals.

Once brought into the "*light of day*" in *La Reproduction*, once illuminated in a scene and activated in a moving triptych, the chronological order of mirroring, of figures appearing/the appearance of figures in literary and art history, loses relevance. The

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<sup>138</sup> Cohn, D. (2005) Metalepse et *mise en abyme* in J. P. et J.M. Schaeffer (Eds.), *Metalepses: Entorses au pacte de la representation*. Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Sciences Sociales, pp. 121-132.

tale's abundance or length, like Cortazar's *Continuity of Parks*, and the mirrored figures classified into internal or external metalepsis (see Cohn 2005: 126-130),<sup>139</sup> do not appear to tackle the question we are dealing with. Verisimilitude is not attained by including the figural technology of mirror, but by virtuality. Dizziness, vertigo and anguish accompany us when leaving verisimilar terrains. Acquisition of the unusual perspective over the reproduction machinery, undressed from the pretense of originality, reflects a form's constant transformations. Forms are left in pieces, and not always really replicated by redundancy. No mediation is maintained between the interface and the hidden reproduction laboratory. Reproduction is pristine and positioned in the middle of the scene, its sparkling technology covering and uncovering its back-and-forth movement, concealing and unconcealing its presence. The virtual is not known in advance, nor does reproduction mark an exact mechanical repetition.

Movement and positioning are effectuated by Mirror and the figural blurring of the différence between mise en abyme, chiasmus and metalepsis in *La Reproduction* because they are confounded into an entire figural phrase. An invagination of figural borders takes place and gives birth to the *mirror's triptychal technology* as if repeating the trio Poe, Baudelaire and Magritte, or compressing three mirrors folded into one. The three advance together, but each of its parts is different from the other yet simultaneously similar to the other.

It is neither unusual for the three to advance together nor for the three to interchange retrace movements incessantly. Sparkling, between advances and retreats in different orbits and velocities, *Ilinx*, the rarest rare and most unsecure type of game, appears here to stay. As Derrida has said:

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

"...all genres [have – DSK] been able to play the role of order's principle: resemblance, analogy, identity and difference, taxonomic classification, organization and genealogical tree, order of reason, sense of sense, truth of truth, natural light and sense of history..." (Derrida, 1980: 81).<sup>140</sup>

*The Portrait*, not less than *An Account (The Madness of the Day)* by Blanchot, has inspired the madness of genre by painting all the Mirrors of the world; it has re-introduced the mirror presence, a presence that, by sparkling, twinkling, gleaming and phosphoring, "has inundated and divided the borders between literature and its other" modes of representation (Derrida, 1980: 81).<sup>141</sup>

Curiously, Derridas' "Law of Genre", as if a new protocol, closes (opens) itself after treating *An Account (The Madness of the Day)* by Blanchot with the following text:

*Une traduction?*

Par M

Indeed, the mirror in *The Portrait* confounds between the writer (Poe) and the translator (Baudelaire) of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* by installing a painting of the cover of its translation.

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<sup>140</sup> Derrida, J. (1980) The Law of the Genre (trans. Avital Ronell) *Glyph* 7, Spring. pp. 55-81.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

## 4. The Mirror of Translation

### 4.1 Introduction

As mentioned several times in this work, it is Magritte's painting that suggests the mirror's participation in translation. One of the mirrors in Magritte's painting reflects *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* written by Poe and translated by Baudelaire, confounding between writer and translator, between languages, between geographies and chronotypes. This observation has motivated my tracing of a theoretical itinerary that begin with Magritte's *La Reproduction* but projects itself toward one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's enduring theoretical disputes surrounding of Poe's story "The Purloined Letter" as interpreted primarily by Derrida and Lacan. Advancing the mirror function in translation is a way of again disclosing one of the essences of Mirror qua technology in processes of cultural reproduction.

### 4.2 Poe-Baudelaire translations' itineraries

Even if it were possible to assume that Poe knew that there was some interest in his work in France in 1845, he never met or knew Baudelaire. It was only after Poe's death and the appearance of *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe: With Notices of His Life and Genius* produced by his executor and lifelong enemy, Rufus Wilmot Griswold, that Baudelaire began to systematically research Poe's life and work. By this time, Baudelaire's translated *Revelation Magnétiques* had appeared in the *Liberté de Penser* (July 1848). However, it was probably Griswold's description of Poe as an alcoholic and opium addict (although Poe was neither) that awakened Baudelaire's identification with Poe *le poète maudit*.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Garrait-Bourrier, A. (2000) *Poe Translated by Baudelaire: The Reconstruction of an Identity*: <http://clwebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb02-3/garrait-bourrier02.html>

Garrait-Bourrier (2002)<sup>143</sup> stresses that Baudelaire openly admitted that Poe had a discernible impact on his own work, although he systematically rejected any accusation of plagiarism, as he declared to Edouard Manet:

"...Do you know why, with such infinite patience, I translated Poe? It was because he was like me! The first time I ever opened a book by him I discovered, with rapture and awe, not only subjects which I had dreamt of, but whole phrases which I'd conceived, written by him twenty years before!..."<sup>144</sup>

Baudelaire used to call Poe "*mon frère, mon semblable*"; his own testimony can be related, as Ronell alludes with respect to the Goethe-Eckerman relationship, to spectrality, vampirism and cannibalism, but not less to the constant questioning of proprietorial rights, joint ownership, the writing couple, the other and the Other (Ronell, 1994: 164)<sup>145</sup>. Irrespective of the many differences, this kind of chiasmus, the chiasmus of the couple, whether with a present or absent body – as Ronell clearly documents in her narrative of the Goethe-Eckerman duo – also applies to the case of Baudelaire-Poe. Here we have an ambivalent compound of love, self-redemption, reciprocal safeguarding, residual traces, signatures, remainders, corporeal exchange and lastly a symbolical sexual transversion (Ronell, 1994).<sup>146</sup>

The supplement to the couple or double relationship in the case of Baudelaire-Poe and Magritte's mirrors is translation. By and through translation, the mirror positioned within the passage from language to language, person to person, country to country, culture to culture, landscape to landscape, body to body, identity to identity, idiosyncrasy to idiosyncrasy, Magritte converses with Poe and Baudelaire about doubling by translation and thereby doubling the whole scene of translation.

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> . Quoted by Garrait – Bourrier, *ibid*,

<sup>145</sup> Ronell, A. (1994) Namely Eckerman in *Finitude's Score, Essays for the End of the Millennium*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 159-182.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

Poe's obsessive preoccupation with doubles, where a mirror appears as a medium for the reflection of the self on the other and vice versa, and for the transition from one state to another, is one of his most well-known thematic motifs. William Wilson refers to this preoccupation as reminiscent of a narcissistic attitude but also a desperate echo, as seen in the following paragraphs:

"... His cue, which was to perfect an imitation of myself, lay both in words and in actions; and most admirably did he play his part. My dress it was an easy matter to copy; my gait and general manner were, without difficulty, appropriated; in spite of his constitutional defect, even my voice did not escape him. My louder tones were, of course, unattempted, but then the key, it was identical; and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own....

At that instant some person tried the latch of the door. I hastened to prevent an intrusion, and then immediately returned to my dying antagonist. But what human language can adequately portray that astonishment, that horror which possessed me at the spectacle then presented to view? The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce, apparently, a material change in the arrangements at the upper or farther end of the room. A large mirror – so at first it seemed to me in my confusion – now stood where none had been perceptible before; and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble and tottering gait..." (Edgar Allan Poe, William Wilson).<sup>147</sup>

By translating a significant part of Poe's oeuvre into French, Baudelaire performed the role of Poe's double, falling into the trap of their mutual obsession with the *doubleness* that folds and unfolds identity and difference, self and other.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Poe, E.A. William Wilson: <http://www.online-literature.com/poe/47/>.

<sup>148</sup> See Freud's attitude toward the double motif in Freud, S. (1953) The Uncanny in James Strachey (Trans. and Ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. London: Hogarth. According to Freud the theme of the "double" has been treated by Otto Rank (1914). He has gone into the connections which the "double" has with reflections, mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death; but he also lets in a flood of light on the surprising evolution of the idea. For the "double" was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an "energetic denial of the power of death" as Ranks says; and probably the "immortal" soul was the first "double" of the body...Such ideas have sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and of primitive man. But when this stage has been surmounted the "double" reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death. The "double" has become a thing of terror, just as, after the collapse of religion, the gods turned into demons.

Gallop (1985:66)<sup>149</sup> suggests that any person who devotes great time and effort to conveying someone else's words is already operating under a strong sense of identification, already wishing to operate as a double. Translation is therefore prey to distortion, that is, it is unwittingly, unreflectedly, deformed by the translator's imagination. Indeed, Garrat-Bourrier (2002) interprets Poe as translated by Baudelaire as a process of identity reconstruction that includes a thematic vampirization, an unavoidable linguistic betrayal and the possibility of homoeroticism, accompanied by the transgender imagination embraced by Poe as well as by Baudelaire. This relationship, established mainly by Baudelaire's translation but responding to Poe's preoccupation with the double might, as suggested by Bourrier (2002) be a kind of *tessera*, the phenomenon of unconscious reappropriation as a clear manifestation of what Harold Bloom nominated as the *anxiety of influence*. Instead of fighting against the influence of the first writer, the second writer, moved by passion, prefers to vampirize him, to suck out his creative substance, an act of simultaneous completion as well as betrayal. This betrayal, linked to Baudelaire's linguistic possession of Poe, is quite relevant for understanding the widely known critiques of Baudelaire's inaccurate translations of Poe (Bourrier, 2002).<sup>150</sup>

Since Huxley, from James through Richard, Bonaparte, Lacan and Derrida, Baudelaire's French translation of Poe has been considered as not quite exact because its modalities of deviation and variation *vis-a-vis* the original text. As suggested by Ronell, Poe, swallowed and ventriloquated in French by Baudelaire as a toxic, acquired a *second life*:

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<sup>149</sup> Gallop, J. (1985) *Reading Lacan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

<sup>150</sup> Gallop, J. (1988) The American Other in J. P. Muller & W.J. Richardson (Eds.), *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 268-283.

"...It was while working on Edgar Allan Poe that Baudelaire recognized the logic of the tomb, to which he attached the stomach. The stomach became the tomb. At one point Baudelaire seems to ask: whom are you preserving in alcohol? This logic, called the resurrectionist, the supreme lucidity of intoxication, which arises when you have something in you that must be encrypted..." (Ronell, *War Cracks* 6, 1993).<sup>151</sup>

No wonder, then, that the expulsion of the self by the inclusion of the other gives birth to inexactitudes not always considered negative in a translation. In the preface to his own translation of Baudelaire into German, Benjamin approached the vitality of translation as marked by the necessity of difference between the original and its afterlife, while recognizing that the words' potentialities of meaning mature yet acquire freshness through time. Advocating mutation in languages, time and people as flexibility in the performance of translation practices, Benjamin referred to translatability as an essential quality of certain works:

"...[by] virtue of its translatability the original is closely connected with the translation; in fact, this connection is all the closer since it is no longer of importance to the original. We may call this connection a natural one, or, more specifically, a vital connection..." (Benjamin 2004: 75-94).<sup>152</sup>

The liquidity of language, the *vision of language itself* (Agamben 1999:47)<sup>153</sup> in the ocean separating Baudelaire from Poe, is figured by translation in its role as a mirror performance, activating the chiasmus that demarks *mediation* by resembling the reflexive games inherent in language, transvaluating and transporting all things and all knowledge.

A clear differentiation between the mirror and mirror image, as proposed by Lacan, is therefore negated because there is no possibility of Mirror per se in the absence of a

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<sup>151</sup> Ronell, A. (1993) *Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

<sup>152</sup> Benjamin, W. (2004) "The Task of the Translator", An Introduction to the translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens* (Trans. Harry Zohn) in Lawrence Venuti (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

<sup>153</sup> Agamben, G. (1999) *Potentialities, Collected Essays in Philosophy*, with an Introduction by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Ed. and Tr.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

figural past or future. Hence, it is difficult to imagine a mirror image without exposing the folding and unfolding figures that comprise its being.

Resembling memoirs by translation is how Jorge Luis Borges, one of Poe's translators into Spanish, personifies his character and protagonist in "The Immortal", a poet who has lived for many centuries and almost forgotten his own poems. The poet regains his poems' afterlife and protocols through the instrument of modern translation.

Borges' ludic attitude has pushed Benjamin's position toward translation still further.

The double functioning of Borges as a writer *and* translator was a constant in the author's biography. He translated throughout his life, from the age of ten, beginning with Oscar Wilde, to the end of his life, when he prepared a Spanish version of the *Prose Edda*. Borges transformed the work of Poe, Kafka, Hesse, Kipling, Melville, Gide, Faulkner, Whitman, Woolf, Chesterton and many others. In a multitude of essays, lectures, and interviews he analyzed the versions prepared by others and developed an engaging view about translation. Borges held that a translation can improve an original, that contradictory renderings of the same work can be equally valid and that an original can be unfaithful to a translation. Translation is also a recurrent motif in Borges' fictions, which include actual or imagined translations; some of his most important characters are translators. In "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," Borges's character is a respected Symbolist poet but also a translator. The story's narrator insists that Menard's masterpiece – his "invisible work" – adds unsuspected layers of meaning to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.

Mirror, as proposed by Magritte in *La Reproduction*, allows resemblance or "the soul's movement of going out and coming back which is the general movement of translation". This very movement, intercepted by Derrida (1995) quoting Berman, reminds us of the speculative reformulation of *Bildung* classical law as it was

considered by Schelling, Hegel and Schlegel: the own accedes to itself by experiencing the foreign. The mirror, incarnated through translation from one language into the other – by Baudelaire translating Poe together with the two artists alluded to and painted by Magritte – has a formative function in the creation of the Baudelaire-Poe-Baudelaire triptych: Baudelaire translates Poe while staying the same Baudelaire and at the same time converting himself and his corpus into a reflective compound identical yet different from himself, as Lacan noted in his "The Mirror Stage as *Formative* of the Function of the I".<sup>154</sup>

The mirror has in this situation a key role, as noted by Jane Gallop in her reading of Lacan's assertion that the mirror stage is a decisive moment from which the self but also "the body in bits and pieces" issues. According to Gallop, this moment is the source not only for what follows but also for what precedes it, that is, the moment produces the future through anticipation and the past through retroaction. The two are violations of chronology but, taken separately, anticipation and retroaction, can, if necessary, be sorted out, their elements reassigned to their proper chronological place. The specific difficulty in thinking about the temporality of the mirror stage, according to Gallop, is its intrication of anticipation with retroaction (Gallop, 1985)<sup>155</sup>. The triptych technology of the mirror as seen in Magritte's *La Reproduction*, including *mise en abyme*, chiasmus and metalepsis, proposes a gaming situation where mirrors advance and retroact concurrently. Magritte's mirror games thus refer to chronology violations and to the indefinite position of the *before* and *after* by the performative portraiture of the book cover, that is, what covers Baudelaire's translation of Poe's *The*

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<sup>154</sup> Lacan, J. (1977) The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience in *Ecrits: A Selection* (Alan Sheridan, Tr.). New York: Norton, 1-2, 4-5.

<sup>155</sup> Garrait-Bourrier, A. (2000) *Poe Translated by Baudelaire: The Reconstruction of an Identity*: <http://clwebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb02-3/garrait-bourrier02.html>.

*Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. In the mirror's reflection, Baudelaire's translation precedes Poe's original work.

Today it is difficult to differentiate Poe-Baudelaire-Poe from Baudelaire-Poe-Baudelaire for most of the Poe read in almost every language has in some way been mediated by Baudelaire. Discerning between the two is further complicated when we recall Poe's thematic preoccupation with the double, demonstrated in "William Wilson", *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, "The Oval Portrait" and, of course, "The Purloined Letter".

### **4.3 Poe – Baudelaire in the mirror that between Derrida and Lacan**

An analysis of "The Purloined Letter", in which the Poe-Baudelaire chiasmic relationship is mediated by translation and doubleness, was projected and echoed in the chiasmus between Derrida and Lacan.

According to Jane Gallop (1988)<sup>156</sup>, Lacan's reading of the mirror in translation was blocked from the beginning. The Lacanian mirror figure was not, therefore, a doubling technology and device participating in translation but, rather, a kind of movement from the imaginary to the real (the original text), which was always frustrated. Not only did Lacan obviate the existing French-(American) English translation of the relationship between the narrator and Dupin in "The Purloined Letter", he has also introduced his subject as "the tale which Baudelaire translated under the title *La lettre volée*". Gallop stresses that Lacan introduced his subject explicitly as translation and that Baudelaire was mentioned a full page before Poe. Then, tracing a chain of translations as mirror reflections, Gallop differentiates between a Lacanian translation and a translation of Lacan by explicitly introducing

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<sup>156</sup> . Gallop, J. (1988) The American Other in J. P. Muller & W.J. Richardson (eds.), *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*. Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, p. 272.

the play of mirrors between translations beginning from Poe – who projected his admiration of the French genius on Dupin by projecting his imago of the French into the character – until the Lacan *Ecrits*' translators into English, Sheridan and Mehlman. In Jane Gallop's reading, translation as attained and created by Mirror is linked to one of the most important thematic clusters in the unending dispute between philosophy and psychoanalysis – but also between metaphysics and deconstruction – in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Lacanian system of interpretation illustrates Mirror as performing different functions in the passage from identification to recognition of all the devices participating in the deformation of the Real. According to Gallop, reading Lacan vis-à-vis the American other, a mirror image can be understood either as a specular opposite (right versus left) or as something identical. Gallop stresses that Lacan in fact situates opposites – rivalry and aggressivity – in identification; for him the adversary is simply one version of the alter ego. He terms the relationship between the self and its mirror image (either as adversity or as identity) the "imaginary". "The imaginary" is the realm where intersubjective structures are concealed through mirroring. Another figure of the Lacanian mirror is the broken mirror that, in Gallop's view, introduces the implicit ethical imperative to break the mirror in order to reach the symbolic – which for Lacan is the register of language, social exchange and radical intersubjectivity. "But, inasmuch as anyone would be 'for' the symbolic and 'against' the imaginary'," Gallop adds, "he would be operating in the imaginary". The mirror of the imaginary is thus a deforming mirror for in the imaginary mode, one's understanding of other people is shaped by one's imagoes. The perceived other is actually, at least in part, a projection. Psychoanalysis is an attempt to recognize the subject's imagoes in order to ascertain their deforming effect on the subject's understanding of her relationships. The point is not to give up the imagoes or to create

better ones, but to understand these imagoes as structuring projections. This means more than not avoiding the imaginary nor condemning the mirror: Gallop reminds us that in "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis"<sup>157</sup>, Lacan insists that the "imago is revealed only insofar as our attitude offers the subject the pure mirror of unruffled surface" (quoted by Gallop, pp. 272)<sup>158</sup>. What Lacan prescribes is for the analyst to function as a mirror for the analysand: A mirror, but not a mirror image. According to this line of reasoning, psychoanalysis should be an encounter not with a likeness or a double, but with a mirror. The ethical imperative thus entails living in the symbolic, the charge is to look into the mirror and see not the image but the mirror itself.

Derrida's differentiation from Lacan resides in the impossibility of avoiding the double. He relates to Baudelaire's translation of Poe in a marginal note: "The entire passage must be read, and in both languages. I have allowed myself to do some cooking based on Baudelaire's translation, which I do not always respect".<sup>159</sup>

Lacan and Derrida alike criticized Baudelaire's translation of Poe's "The Purloined Letter". Their critique of the translation differed as did their interpretation of the story, but while Derrida sends his readers to read in the two languages (French and English) and thus preserves the double with its possibilities and limitations, Lacan discusses the difference between "purloined" and "*volée*", the word Baudelaire used in his translation. Lacan's preoccupation was with fidelity in translation, in other words, he

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<sup>157</sup> Lacan, J. Miller, J.A. & Sheridan, A. (1998) *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 11)*. New York: Norton.

<sup>158</sup> Gallop, J. (1988) The American Other in J. P. Muller & W.J. Richardson (eds.), *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*. Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, p. 272.

<sup>159</sup> Derrida, J. (1988) "The Purveyor of Truth" (Alan Bass, Tr.) in Muller, John P. Muller & William J. Richardson (Eds.), *The Purloined Poe, Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*. Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, pp. 173-213.

was looking for what he considered a more accurate translation of the word, perhaps as part of his search for truth.<sup>160</sup>

Derrida, basically perceiving the doubleness in his reading of "The Purloined Letter", was quite aware of the chiasmus between himself and Lacan. In his "For the Love of Lacan" (1996)<sup>161</sup>, Derrida proposed three protocols as forming the inseparable fusion between himself and Lacan: of chiasmus; of the past perfect (future in the past) of "deferred action" (*l'après-coup*), and of the chiasitic invagination of borders or the site of analysis. But what happens to "the with – in-between" (*avec entre deux*) when there is a chiasmus, the "deferred action" of the future in the past, and chiasitic invagination (Derrida, 1996)?

Geographically, Baltimore – Poe's place of birth – was the scene of the Derrida-Lacan meeting in 1966. Derrida's opening questions in "For the Love of Lacan" recall not only "What wouldn't Lacan have said!" "What didn't he say!" (Derrida, 1996), they also invite, in my view, other possible questions: "What wouldn't Poe/Baudelaire have said!" "What didn't they say!" This, of course it brings as to what Magritte has suggested about chiasmus.

The chiasmus Derrida refers to was structured by the differences in his and Lacan's readings of close themes. Not surprisingly, if adopting a supposed Derridarian point of view, doubleness between his work and Lacan's, more than in other theories, needed the one in the other in order to construct their own principles. It is by deconstructing

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<sup>160</sup> . See Jacques Lacan, Seminar on "The Purloined Letter" translated by Jeffrey Mehlman and Jacques Derrida, *The Purveyor of Truth*, translated by Alan Blass. In: Muller, J.P & Richardson, W.J. (eds.) *The Purloined Poe, Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*. Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press.

<sup>161</sup> Derrida, J. (1996) *For the Love of Lacan*: <http://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number2/deridda.htm>.

Lacan's readings that Derrida performed deconstruction. Lacan extended the challenge to Derrida:

"...Thus, so much for the form of the chiasmus. I found myself before a forceful philosophical, philosophizing reconstruction of psychoanalysis that articulated and assumed and bound with considerable consequence all the motifs that moreover lent themselves, not without resistance, to something akin to a genealogico-deconstructive interpretation. At the same time, of course, there was nothing to oppose in this philosophical restructuring of psychoanalytic discourse or institutions, in this philosophical and thus critical questioning which – also putting to work what is most vital in philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, displacing them and reformatizing them in turn in an original way – was far more interesting than what then lay dormant behind the term psychoanalysis. This chiasmus or, as Major also said, this criss-crossing (*chassé-croisé*), was even more paradoxical because an impulse was generated by psychoanalysis in general – and from Freud, whom I also was trying to give a personal reading, very dissimilar to Lacan's in Freud and the Scene of Writing (21) – to deconstruct the privilege of presence, at least as consciousness and egological consciousness which, although apparently exterior but certainly not fortuitous, was converging with the necessity to do this along other lines, via other questions, in which I was in any case engaged (readings of Husserl, Heidegger, the question of writing and of literature, etc.). Thus, the discourse that was at once the closest and the most deconstructive, the most likely to be deconstructed at the time, was without doubt that of Lacan. This had already been indicated in *Of Grammatology* (1965-1966), with regard to the primacy of the signifier..."(Derrida, 1996)<sup>162</sup>

The *differance* between them continued; Derrida's reading of Lacan in the mid 1990's only stresses his recognition of the chiasmus and the inseparable entity composed by the Derrida-Lacan invagination of borders.

Derrida and Lacan, between psychoanalysis and philosophy, among other thematic contemporary meetings, awakened the relevance of Mirror in translation by their parallel and chiasmic oeuvres in an age of trembling borders and caesura.

Translation generally activates mirrors and is activated by mirrors, unveils its cardinal mediation and transformation function in the *translatus*, carrying sight across from one place to another, conforming the al unison heterotopy and utopy (Foucault,

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

2003)<sup>163</sup> of the meeting of languages' speakers, listeners and readers. Baudelaire's translation of Poe's text was one of the clusters dealt with by Derrida and Lacan with respect to "The Purloined Letter". Derrida, well aware of the impossibility of mastering the chiasmus by projecting images to the infinite, as Magritte proposes to do in *La Reproduction*, refers to this unfeasible textual performance. He explains that once in play, the archive, the invaginated space of cultural production remains unmasterable, making the exclamations opening his "For the Love of Lacan" – "What wouldn't Lacan have said! What didn't he say!" – grammars that can play the roles of screen and mirror alternatively, simultaneous and successively. This they do in forms of the since (*depuis*), which determined Lacan's relationship to the philosophers – "certain philosophers" (Derrida, 1996)<sup>164</sup> – who continue to project and reflect Derrida into Lacan and Lacan into Derrida but without mastering these projections' and reflections' directions and modes.

The Poe-Baudelaire/Lacan-Derrida chiasmic transferences and translations continue to circulate in the meaning and meaning-making scene; perhaps, as designed by Derrida, they may be continuing the volatile mourning and monuments, eternalizing doubleness and mirroring as a way of creating and eternalizing traces of (re)production:

"...Isn't this what a translation does? Doesn't it guarantee these *two* survivals by losing the flesh during a process of conversion (*change*)? By elevating the signifier to its meaning and value, all the while preserving the mournful and debt-laden memory of the singular body, the first body, the unique body that the translation thus elevates, preserves and negates on the negative—this relevance is a travail of mourning, in the most enigmatic sense of the word (...)The measure of the *relève* or relevance, the price of a translation, is always what is called meaning, that is value, preservation, truth as preservation (*Wahreit, bewahren*) or the value of meaning, namely, what, in being freed from the body, is elevated above it,

<sup>163</sup> Foucault, M. (2003) *Heteropia* (Introduction by Ariela Azoulay (Ed.). Tel Aviv: Resling.

<sup>164</sup> Derrida, J. (1996) *For the Love of Lacan*: <http://www.psychomedia.it/jep/number2/deridda.htm>.

interiorizes it, spiritualizes it, preserves it in a memory. A faithful and mournful memory. One doesn't even have to say that translation preserves the value of meaning or must raise (*relever*) the body to it: the very concept, the value of meaning, the meaning of meaning, the value of the preserved value originates in the mournful experience of translation, of its very possibility. By resisting this transcription, this transaction that is a translation, this *relève*, Shylock delivers himself into the grasp of the Christian strategy, bound hand and foot. (The cost of a wager between Judaism and Christianity, blow for blow: they translate themselves, although not into one another).

I insist on the Christian dimension. Apart from all the traces that Christianity has left on the history of translation and the normative concept of translation, apart from the fact that the *relève*, Hegel's *Aufhebung* (one must never forget that he was a Lutheran thinker, undoubtedly like Heidegger), is explicitly a speculative *relève* of the Passion and Good Friday into absolute knowledge, the travail of mourning also describes through the Passion, through a memory haunted by the body lost yet preserved in its grave, the resurrection of the ghost or of the glorious body that rises, rises again (*se relève*) and walks..." (Derrida, What is a "Relevant" Translation, *Critical Inquiry* 2001: 199-200).<sup>165</sup>

These somber worldviews and impressions were pocked out from Poe's and Baudelaire's artistic works as well as from their theoretical and critical cultural insights not less than from those of Magritte, depicted in text and painting. Two places that generate and reflect cultural reproduction, the mirror and the text, were approached by Magritte while echoing Poe's and Baudelaire's texts, considered as two literary bodies. It is as if Magritte affected a kind of withdrawal to the position of textual elliptical movement. Abrams<sup>166</sup> intercepted this movement as an artistic and theoretical trial entailing the surmounting of imitation and mimesis, as the idealistic creation of a better manhood representation. Alternative and parallel worlds were then figured containing inside and outside, good and evil, the one and the other, the other in one and one in the other. Reflexibility interested Magritte not only at the seeing level, but also as a way to be in the world. Magritte believed in the infinity of life's

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<sup>165</sup> Derrida, J. (2001) What Is a 'Relevant' Translation? *Critical Inquiry* 27: 174-200.

<sup>166</sup> Abrams, M.H. (1971) *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. London & New York: Oxford University Press.

unknown possibilities, suspecting the evidence of daily life to be a response to questions that still do not exist. At this point he could coincide with Poe (and other "detective story writers"), considering virtual reality to be a still-hidden aspect of the world, suspected by the reversal of cause and effect, in a way annulling the metaphorical unit-directional algorithmic movement between the two.

## **5.0 Ideologies among the mirrors**

I should have begun this essay on Mirror here, in the Hall of Mirrors, where I have found myself while writing on Ideology. This was also the place from which I thought it impossible to exit. If this is truly the case, I want to study Mirror again.

It is at the precise moment and place where we are confronted with a new beginning of the endless play of ideological generation and its critique that theoretically beautiful constructs, aesthetically coherent and offering different levels of new understanding, actually collapse. In fact, the domain of ideologies may be best imagined as a labyrinthine hall of mirrors in which ideology critique is rendered an endlessly self-reproducing Sisyphean labor. Considering the last century there has been an impressive amount of contributions, direct and indirect, to the study of this field: sociology, psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, political science, philosophy, history, neurology, linguistics, semiotics that have all added important perspectives.

Ideology critique, as Burbules (1992)<sup>167</sup> says, is a theoretical chameleon, epistemologically colored by the tints of the different theories through which such a critique is approached. Its motifs or linked thematic issues, like mirrors and mirror

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<sup>167</sup> Burbules, N. (1992). Forms of ideology critique: a pedagogical perspective. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 5(1), 7-17.

effects, have been intercepted and indeed observed from different theoretical vantage points (for instance, rational and Marxist).

Oversimplified polarities accompany ideology critique. It is always "my philosophy" and "your ideology"; "reality" versus "ideology"; "assumptions" versus "truth"; "distorted" versus "correct" world views. Ideology critique so often appears as an effort to entangle the problematics of a narrative construct considered as mediating between things as they are, by themselves, in reality and how they are individually, culturally and socially perceived. It is as if a desperate and nostalgic longing for the possibility of seeing, hearing, touching and thus perceiving the world, without mediation or as "it really is," drives the effort. Moreover, it expresses the hope to evade a distortive mediation. For most believe that ideologies (and mirrors, too) always distort possibly truthful pictures of the world.

Alternatively, some strategies for evading bias and distortion are meant to devise purposive actions in order to study ideologies in a more "objective" way.

Lamm (2002)<sup>168</sup>, in response to this, has proposed adopting a pluralistic view regarding ideologies, that is to say: always to consider at least two ideologies as a way of taking into account their limiting effects and as a way of gaining a relative and critical point of view rather than obtaining absolute evaluations.

Zizek proposes granting psychoanalysis the key role of providing the missing support for Marxist theory of ideology, which failed to conceptualize any materiality but class struggle:

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<sup>168</sup> Lamm, Z. (2002). *In the whirlpool of ideologies, education in the twentieth century*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press. (Hebrew)

Perhaps a comparison with Freud's theory of dreams could be of some help here. Freud points out that within a dream we encounter the hard kernel of the Real precisely in the guise of a 'dream within the dream'-that is to say, where the distance from reality seems redoubled. In some homologous way, we encounter the inherent limit of social reality, what has to be foreclosed if the consistent field of reality is to emerge, precisely in the guise of the problematic of ideology, of a 'superstructure', of something that appears to be a mere epiphenomenon, a mirror-reflection, of 'true' social life. We are dealing with the paradoxical topology in which the surface ('mere ideology') is directly linked to-occupies the place of, stands in for- what is deeper than depth itself", more real than reality itself (Zizek, 1999, p.82).<sup>169</sup>

The above exposed distancing strategies do not simply lead to the point of disappearance of the mirroring effect of ideology critique. What they can do, however, I believe, is to suspend, temporarily, the effects of ideology through a moment of contemplation, or in other words a unique "chronotope", a moment "away from the clock" (Cortazar, 1977)<sup>170</sup>. From such a position it is possible to distinguish how ideological narratives construct themselves around our most terrifying nightmares or our most powerful desires. But their mirroring effect doesn't disappear.

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<sup>169</sup> Zizek, S. (1999). The Specter of Ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds.), *The Zizek Reader* (pp. 53-87). London: Blackwell.

<sup>170</sup> Burbules, N. (1992). Forms of ideology critique: A pedagogical perspective.

My work on ideologies to date has also been based on creating a strategy that, through the aesthetic distance proposed by Serge Dubrovsky<sup>171</sup>, allows study of educational ideologies as a genre created and reflected – and vice versa – in textual procedures.<sup>172</sup>

Thanks to distancing strategies, I have found myself in a Hall of Mirrors. That is:

However and whenever I have dealt with ideologies in place of socio-cultural production and reproduction, the mirror function, in whatever form, was always there, generating and reflecting effects; in this way, it became a constant, sparking movement. I therefore adopted a different attitude and instead of searching for a distance from which to work with the ideological, I have chosen to approach the place I believe that mirrors find themselves among and within ideologies.

My essay on re-viewing mirrors in "ideological narratives" is based on the assumption that ideology is a *primum factum*. I adopt a Geertzian attitude toward ideologies and treat them as cultural narratives, necessary for most people and cultures in order to introduce some sense, explanation/reason, justification and motivation to human action and behavior (Geertz, 1973).<sup>173</sup> According to Geertz, when confined to the framework of ideology, chaotic and unconnected actions, facts and knowledge lose the power of anguish. Instead, they begin to offer more or less coherent narratives that interweave between what at first seemed to have no signification with clues for understanding the world.

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<sup>171</sup> Dubrovsky, S. (1973). *Corneille et la Dialectique du Héros*. Paris: Gallimard.

<sup>172</sup> Silberman Keller, D. (2004) Three plots, six characters and infinite possible educational narratives. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36 (4), 379–398.

<sup>173</sup> Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic.

Contrarily to trying to find distancing methods, adopting ideology as a *primum factum* means accepting that everything is within ideology and interwoven with ideologies; as such, ideology participates in the creation, shaping, production and reproduction of every element in human life. It means adopting "differance" and "traces" (Derrida, 1982)<sup>174</sup> as inscribed, reflecting, projecting and echoing every mark and sign left by (wo)men during the formation and recognition of everything throughout time. Everything includes everything and differs from everything.

What seems possible in this place and at this moment, after having studied Mirror from Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*, is to adopt a different approach in my attempt to revise our understanding of ideology's mirroring effects. Approaching Mirror as a life technique reveals mirrors as remediating and translating vast interwoven narratives that reproduce themselves *ad libidum* (Shirmacher, 2003).<sup>175</sup> Moreover, it might be that the *triptych mirror technology* composed by *mise en abyme*, *chiasmus* and *metalepsis* as imagined in Magritte's *La Reproduction* has an important function in our reconsideration of the concealing and revealing presence of Mirror among ideologies.

The notions of objectivity falsification and picturing truthfulness through mirroring ideologies are, in my view, irrelevant. Because ideologies naturalize artifacts of reality, the question of their truth is one of the thematic clusters appearing *inside* the specific ideological narrative.

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<sup>174</sup>Derrida, J. (1982) *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press. pp. 3-27.

<sup>175</sup> Shirmacher, W. (2007) Net culture. *The Psychoanalytic Review*. 94(1),141-151.

The first stop in this essay on the Mirror-ideology relationship is Systematic Ideology, which offers a compound of thematic ideological narratives together with a description and explanation of the way they function.

## **5.1 . Installing Ideology Critique Theories**

### **5.1.1 Ideological Narratives: Systematic Ideology**

The occurrence of Mirror among Ideologies assaulted me while studying Systematic Ideology (SI) as developed by Walsby (1947)<sup>176</sup> and Walford (1990)<sup>177</sup>. This is a theory that was never fully taken on board by the academic establishment. Yet, several scholars have compared some of its aspects to major, accepted theories (Lamm, 1984)<sup>178</sup>.

I was introduced to SI during my doctoral studies (1986)<sup>179</sup> and even engaged in some correspondence with George Walford at the end of the 1980s. Walford's enthusiastic support of my work encouraged the theoretical linking between SI and the characterization of the texts of educational ideologies as a genre (Silberman-Keller, 1994)<sup>180</sup>.

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<sup>176</sup> Walsby, H. (1947). *The domain of ideologies*. Glasgow: McLellan.

<sup>177</sup> . Walford, G. (1990). *Beyond Politics, an outline of systematic ideology*. London: Calabria.

<sup>178</sup> Lamm, Z. (1984). Ideologies in a hierarchical order. *Science and Public Policy*, February Issue.

<sup>179</sup> Silberman-Keller, D. (1992) *State education and religious state education: Two ideological frameworks*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Unpublished PhD thesis.

<sup>180</sup> Silberman-Keller, D. (1994). The text of educational ideologies: Toward the characterization of a genre. *Educational Theory*, 44(1), 26-43.

### 5.1.2 Systematic Ideology's Definition of Ideology

Systematic Ideology defines ideology as a complete system of cognitive assumptions and affective identifications that manifest themselves in, or underlie, the thought, speech, aims, interests, ideals, ethical standards, actions – in short, the behavior – of an individual human being (Walsby, 1947)<sup>181</sup>.

Walford clarifies that the ordinary and academic usage of ideology usually refers to a relatively superficial expression of something deeper (such as class interest, or psychological disposition). This reduces the significance of ideology and the importance of its study. In Walford's view rather than interests governing ideologies, ideologies determine interests. Thus, for instance, Communists promote the interests of the working class because of the beliefs they hold, and not vice versa, because they are workers (Walford, 1990, p. 50)<sup>182</sup>.

SI is an ideology of ideologies, assuming the only way to study ideologies is ideological. "Ideology" does not bear a pejorative connotation although it includes a twofold hierarchy. One hierarchical element is linked to the relation between time and social construction and the other to a social group's size. Hence ideological hierarchies do not reflect positive or negative attitudes toward the ideologies they include but only their chronological order and the amount of people who practice or profess them.

Although individuals, groups and social constructs perform and reflect specific ideological narratives, they are all pluri-ideological because they hold various ideas or

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<sup>181</sup> Walsby, H. (1947). *The Domain of Ideologies*. Glasgow: McLellan.

<sup>182</sup> Walsby, H. (1947). *The Domain of Ideologies*. Glasgow: McLellan.

perform various behaviors simultaneously and are part of different social institutions deriving from different ideological archetypes.

An ideological narrative is based on specific *assumptions* and *identifications* that generate and reflect entire doctrines or social institutions, social and cultural phenomena that prescribe and reflect specific ideas and practices.

Moving from one ideology to another in the hierarchy of ideologies implies changing basic assumptions and identifications. Such movement usually occurs when individuals or groups feel constrained in fulfilling their needs. The attainment of increased degrees of freedom in order to perform social functions is what motivates the passage from one ideological narrative to another one placed higher in the hierarchy. When there is a reduction in degrees of freedom this leads to a return to an anterior ideological narrative. Hence this hierarchy does not constitute a continuous progress but rather an order of social functioning described by means of more or less degrees limitations in specific situations.

I believe that individuals constantly move up and down these ideological hierarchies (according to SI) not only due to these dynamics but as a consequence of their participation in different situational positions simultaneously. For instance, one can be an anarchist, as well as a citizen in a national state, while working, at the very same time as a teacher. Each of these practices is guided and justified by different ideologies deriving from three ideological narratives, yet they are performed or held by one and the same person. It is this possibility to combine an infinite number of ideologies stemming from seven SI narratives that generates nets of explanations, justifications, practices and beliefs. Freedom, then, is ideologically situated and its interpretation differs in relation to specific ideological stances contemporarily and

locally determined. For being an anarchist, and a citizen and a teacher can be considered as free floating, possible ideological performances that takes on certain ideological contents when matched with certain specifications.

Thus it is possible to be an anarchist either individually or socially, to either actively participate in, or repudiate, a national state and still be a citizen of that state, and to be either a conservative or a radical teacher.

Moreover if, according to SI, many social institutions, not exclusively Althusser's (1999)<sup>183</sup> Ideological State Apparatuses, find their generative ideological place in different ideological narratives, our participation in society makes us merely inscribed traces of a variety of ideological narratives. This makes every one of us a carrier, reflector and projector of those various ideological narratives beyond those we have chosen to adopt as our epistemological strategies. For instance, it is almost a norm that each of us descends from a family and that even though we give our family a specific signification, that signification does not coincide with the family as it appears in the protostatic narrative, the most basic framework of survival. Still, the very presence of this family's ideological narrative will be present, for instance, in the homosexual family. Even where the family is absent as a functioning unit, an event observed in boarding schools where endangered youth are guided by functionaries that purposefully preserve feminine and male roles in their performance of the parts the missing parents, we find traces of the traditional family.

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<sup>183</sup> Althusser, L. (1999) Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation) in Slavoj Zizek (ed.) Mapping Ideology. London, New York, Verso. pp. 100 – 140.

Zizek's (1999)<sup>184</sup> psychoanalytical-philosophical critique of ideologies adds to this the idea that this quest for symbolization is ever frustrated. I moreover believe that it is possible to consider that Zizek further expands Walsby's and Walford's explanation of dynamic ideological production by adding that this production does not only emerge as a result of limitations on the realization of needs. Zizek proposes that the frustrated possibility of symbolization and the impossibility to leave assumptions and identifications aside are, together, what causes the difficulty in becoming completely conscious. Much like repression and resistance in psychoanalysis, ideology intervenes to oppose the attempt to bring the unconscious into consciousness (Walsby, 1947), thereby projecting this symptomatic situation and creating mundane reality (Zizek, 1999).

SI, as a critique of ideology, assumes its own limited condition by considering how its very object, i.e., ideology, resists the possibility of being investigated from an external vantage point, though it does suggest the possibility of augmenting knowledge about what ideologies are and how they function.

SI's major contribution is a critique of ideologies that balances between the anthropological and political analysis of ideologies. That is, SI considers the political organization of societies as the way human social life generates and reflects itself.

SI's central concepts of identification and assumption - which do not only refer to ideological thinking but also to the ways in which ideological narratives differ from one another, subsuming not only political ideologies but entire systems of ideas and practices that link between social and individual life; between occupations and social

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<sup>184</sup> Zizek, S. (1999). The spectre of ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds.), *The Zizek reader* (pp. 53-87). London: Blackwell.

theories and between science and every-day life - enlarge the scope of ideological critique.

### 5.1.3 Assumptions and Identifications

Walsby (1947, p. 153)<sup>185</sup> defines an *assumption* as something in one's experience which, under some sort of compulsion or force, however great or small, is given independent or real existence, i.e., is given the status of reality, or an identity of its own similar to the one's own identity. The act of assuming something involves a process in which something is taken and given: What is taken, accepted or received is really the compulsion, the limiting pressure or force exercised by that which is being assumed. In other words, when one makes an assumption one takes or accepts a limitation upon oneself. What is given is one's own independence of the limitation: the limitation is itself given a measure of independence, i.e. is "given" real existence. Walsby further associates assumption with certain psychoanalytic processes, claiming that it involves the introjection of a limitation or determining influence of some kind and the projection of independence or - what amounts to the same thing - the projection of self-dependence or self-determination.

According to Walsby, when, in the process of assumption, we introject a limitation (in the form of either a sensory or abstract stimulus) we react against or "resist" that limitation, by "giving" it "reality" or independence – i.e., by the projection of self determination. And by doing so, by so giving the stimulus the fundamental character of our own identity, we come to identify ourselves with the stimulus. As an assumption it becomes part of our own being. We thus come to identify ourselves

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<sup>185</sup> Walsby, H. (1947). *The domain of ideologies*. Glasgow: McLellan.

with what we “know”, or, in other words, we identify ourselves with the objects of our perception and understanding -that is to say, with that to which our perception and understanding refers (Walsby, 1947, p. 193).<sup>186</sup>

Assumptions are implicit in all expressions of meaning, purpose, design and intelligent action. They underlie, as implications, all statements of fact, expressions of opinion, belief and understanding. And what is particular to assumptions is that they are absolute.

Even those ideologies that affirm that every thing is relative must treat the “relative” as ultimate, fundamental and absolute, since there can be nothing that is not relative to itself alone or relative to nothing apart from itself. This absolute nature of assumptions is what forms the basis of all our reality conceptions.

*Identification*, according to Walsby (1947), is involved in the process of assumption, and arises, fundamentally, from the projection of one’s own independent identity, of one’s own inborn assumption of independence or self-determination. Identification differs from assumption because the former is based on and generated by a feeling of dependence upon some person, act, thing, idea - or a collection, class, or group of these. This notion differs from Freud's definition of identification since we stick to the object of assumption even when stimuli distract our attention from it.

Both assumptions and identifications occur, according to Walsby, in two modes, positive and negative, that construct and reflect their structure. Positive assumption structures organize the narrative of how things should be and negative ones organize the narrative of how they should not be.

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<sup>186</sup> Walsby, H. (1947). *The domain of ideologies*. Glasgow: McLellan.

Negative identification takes place when the object is rejected or repudiated. The object of negative identification must be overcome, must be banished or destroyed as a limitation upon the assumption of self-determination. Positive identification takes place with the removal of a limitation and from this point of view positive and negative identification are not mutually exclusive, but rather, interpenetrative and complementary.

#### **5.1.4 The Ideological Narratives**

Walsby (1947) and Walford (1979, 1990) studied ideology diachronically, thereby creating a description of the domain of ideologies that includes seven ideological narratives according to the functions they have in the generation and/or reflection of social phenomena.

These seven ideological narratives were classified in terms of their attitude toward change. *Static ideological narratives* include the *protostatic*, *epistatic* and *parastatic* ideologies and *dynamic ideological narratives* include the *protodynamic*, *epidynamic* and *paradynamic* ideologies. The seventh archetype is *meta-ideology* whose function is to study ideologies.

Differences in assumptions and identifications regarding the structural image of reality (uniform, dual or multiple), positive or negative group identification, individual or collective attitude toward economics, intellectualism, are seen as a negative factor in solving social problems, or positively as the unique way to solve these problems. The attitude toward the cosmos, i.e., the natural and social environment, what –together with the above presented factors- determines the differences among the ideological archetypes.

The first and larger ideological narrative, embraced by the larger human group, emerges around the needs of production and defense so that it organizes individual and social *survival* in its basic sense. The social group that behaves according to this type of ideology tends to develop a positive attitude toward the pertinent group (the family, tribe, community or the state). Its attitude toward the cosmos, by contrast, is negative implying that everything that is external to the group (whether it is natural or social) is a threat. Although the social group identified with these major assumptions develops- whether consciously or unconsciously- individual economical behaviors and though politically it behaves as a collective its attitude toward reality is undifferentiated and it negates “intellectuality”. Lamm (1984) remarked that when an ideology is accepted by either an individual or a group, and it alone fulfills all the functions of an ideology, this ideology is usually situated on the right side of the range of possible ideologies; it might find expression in fascism or in nationalism. But ideologies do not only direct people’s political behavior (Walford, 1979). Thus we can find signs of protostatic ideology in the basic ideas underlying mass formations or institutions like the military and militarism as preoccupied with defense, security or survival. Massive formations according to the protostatic ideologies can be find in the ideas underlying mass communication, mass education, when it refers to consumer profiles, or when it involves a rock' performance public. All of them contributing to mass formations.

The need to enlarge freedom is what leads to the passage to the next ideological narrative: the epistatic narrative.

Lamm (1984)<sup>187</sup> characterizes the epistatic ideological narrative as the one sanctioning the existing situation. Nevertheless it is, under certain conditions, ready to approve change and to condone the existence of other groups. This, therefore, reflects an attitude toward reality that allows for perceptions of duality. The social group identified with this ideology might accept that other groups also have a claim on truth or justice, and in peaceful times they might be critical about their own society. Nevertheless this ideological archetype rejects intellectual activity as a praxis though it is not hostile to it. Since its basic function is the maintenance of society, this ideological narrative can motivate or justify change but only with the ultimate aim to conserve society as it is. This ideology formulates itself around the danger of destruction of the pertinent group and it is from this point of view that we must consider the formulations and justifications of its social institutions and phenomena such as police, education, entertainment, diplomacy and conservation professions (librarians, archivists and museum workers) whose main function is to conserve the present and the past. In the realm of politics this ideological narrative supports conservative parties.

The parastatic attitude toward reality is not dualistic, as was the case with the epistatic narrative, but multiple. This ideology motivates or justifies every action undertaken to understand the world with the overarching aim to conserve the reality that backs the pertinent group's existence. Perhaps this is why it is difficult to find sociologists or psychoanalysts fostering parastatic attitudes in their professional lives. It is easier to find these attitudes among researchers in the exact sciences.

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<sup>187</sup> . Lamm, Z. (1984). Ideologies in a hierarchical order. *Science and Public Policy*,, February, pp-pp. 40-46.

Like the preceding ideologies, this one too seeks to maintain the existing situation, although its adherents believe that they are better at doing it. Parastatic ideology does not advocate the maintenance of the prevailing situation regardless of its character, but preaches for its continuous improvement. This ideology has developed ethics and formal logic as well as the physical sciences.

Walford (1979) and Lamm (1984) situate the difference between static ideological archetypes and dynamic ones in society's awareness of the limitations of its freedom. This awareness gives rise to the so-called *eidodynamic ideologies*, which regard poverty, disease, and cruelty as restricting human freedom. Their criticism is directed against society and therefore dynamic ideological narratives' identification with society is negative. On this approach, society is the target against which, or at least within which, it is necessary to act in order to improve man's lot. On the other hand, the cosmos is positively considered as such, and preserved and defended.

Hence holding dynamic ideologies means to be ready to fight in order to correct society and even to change it fundamentally.

Under dynamic ideologies, attitudes toward economics and politics change by developing collectivism toward economy and individualism in politics. The attitude toward "intellectuality" is positive for in these ideologies people are expected to base their action in critical thinking, develop individual responsibility as well as viewpoints. Reality is considered to be a human product and as such subject to change.

The *protodynamic narrative* considers reality as constructed by internal relatedness, i.e. as composed of many interconnected parts. Change in one part supposes change in

all parts of the society and hence this narrative's main function is *reform*. This ideology underlies Systems Theory's explanation of social change and dynamics. Similarly it can be found in every theory that favors gradual structural change. Its political manifestation is Socialism.

The *epidynamic* archetype favors *revolution* as the only strategy capable of truly changing reality, to install freedom, and create social justice. Here revolution is considered not as catastrophe but as the inevitable fulfillment of history as it advances toward its aims. Reality is considered in epidynamic ideologies as an arena of conflicts that cannot be solved by gradual change. The political manifestation of this type of ideology is Communism as an ideology, not as it was practiced in former Communist states, which all carried traces of static ideological narratives. The epidynamic ideological narrative is constantly present in the work of theoreticians in a variety of areas whose main occupation is to develop a critique that aims to uncover the basic contradictions that cause human suffering, together with the ways in which political ideologies function to efface the causes of this suffering.

The *paradynamic* ideological narrative takes the negative identification with society to its extreme by opposing the state as the main agent of social control over the individual. The form of organization, according to this ideological narrative, that has to take the place of the state is an administration that exists only to guarantee individual freedom. Politically, this translates into anarchism. 'Disarm Authority! Arm Your Desires', is the slogan of an actual anarchist web site, repudiating any form of authority and calling for absolute freedom. According to Newman (2003)<sup>188</sup> it is this refusal of centralist and hierarchical politics, this openness to a plurality of

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<sup>188</sup> Newman, S. (2003). *The politics of postanarchism*. <http://www.anarchist.studies.org/>

different identities and struggles, which makes the anti-globalization movement an *anarchist* movement. The anti-globalization movement, without being consciously anarchist, embodies an anarchistic politics in its structure and organization. Just as classical anarchists like Bakunin and Kropotkin insisted, in opposition to Marxists, that the revolutionary struggle could not be confined to or determined only by the class interests of the industrial proletariat, and must be open also to peasants, the lumpenproletariat, and déclassé intellectuals, so too the contemporary movement includes a broad range of struggles, identities and interests—trade unions, students, environmentalists, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, peace activists, and so on.

Beyond politics, paradyamic assumptions and identifications can be found in the narratives that characterize every social practice directed to free individual humans from social compulsion. Among these are psychoanalytic or educational theories that aim toward the removal of impediments of any kind so as to support an analysand's or student's drive toward finding either the "stuff from which he/she is made" (Zizek, 1999)<sup>189</sup> or his/her motivations and capacities toward getting or enlarging knowledge (Lamm, 2002)<sup>190</sup>.

Critics of anarchism claim that it is largely based on the paradigm of enlightenment humanism with its essentialist notions of the rational human subject, and its positivistic faith in science and objective historical laws, just as Marxism was limited

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<sup>189</sup> Zizek, S. (1999). The spectre of ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds.), *The Zizek reader* (pp. 53-87). London: Blackwell.

<sup>190</sup> Lamm, Z. (2002). *In the whirlpool of ideologies, education in the twentieth century*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University - Magnes Press. (Hebrew)

politically by its own categories of class and economic determinism, as well as by its dialectical view of historical development. (see Newman 2003, p.)<sup>191</sup>.

Indeed, the paradynamic ideologies are limited by the very virtue of being an ideology in the first place, because even though they envisage complete freedom, their nature as ideologies as such becomes a factor limiting that very freedom (Lamm, 1984, p.9)<sup>192</sup>:

“...Anyone living in a society where anarchist freedom reigns must be an anarchist. If he is not and, for example, upholds the principle of private property, his very existence makes anarchist society untenable. If this society recognizes his right to own private property it will cease being anarchist and will betray its own principles; and if it forbids him to own private property it will no longer be anarchist because it will exert authority and force to limit the freedom of one of its members. Some anarchists ignore this paradox in their ideology, because it undermines the foundations of their beliefs. Some of them, though a very small number, according to Walford, will continue along the path to freedom, attempting to cope with the dilemma posed by the ideology they accept...”

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<sup>191</sup> Newman, S. (2003). *The politics of postanarchism*. <http://www.anarchist.studies.org/>

<sup>192</sup> Lamm, Z. (1984). Ideologies in a hierarchical order. *Science and Public Policy*, February, pp-pp. 40-46.

Walford assumes (1979)<sup>193</sup> that a small group of anarchists, facing this paradox of the paradyamic ideological archetype, will endeavor to understand the phenomenon itself known as ideology, and thus defeat ideologies as factors limiting their freedoms.

The *metadynamic* ideological archetype - according to Walsby (1947) - recognizes itself as an ideology, and problematizes all ideologies: they have to be dealt with ad hoc and are not articles of faith. In this sense SI is an anti-ideology whose main purpose is to develop an inclusive *ideological critique*.

According to SI it is in the interest of mankind to be released from ideology. Ideology is a kind of distraction that governs human behavior more than humans govern their own fate. Walsby believed that ideology could be researched from within thus offering ideological groups more knowledge about themselves:

Only when this study and understanding of the ideological nature of groups is accomplished by a sufficient number of the more scientifically minded members of the community, will the scientific and-at the same time-democratic control of the group become possible as a really practicable proposition.

With the development of scientific knowledge of the various ideologies or ideological levels, and of the different orientations of their underlying structures of positive-negative assumptions and identifications, it becomes possible to apply this knowledge in the sphere of education, publicity, propaganda, and in social

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<sup>193</sup> Walford, G. (1979). *Ideologies and Their Function, A study on systematic ideology*. London: The Bookshop.

and political aims, ideas etc., of the broader, more inclusive kind, can henceforth be presented to an ideological group in terms of their particular structure of assumptions and identifications, with their practical certainty of acceptance and agreement by the majority within the group.

Human society, with the aid of science and the deterministic principle, has largely conquered the limitations and problems imposed upon it by material nature. With the aid of science and the self - deterministic principle, these problems, too, may eventually be conquered. Human society would then be master, not only of inanimate nature, but of itself. ( Walsby 1947, p. 231)<sup>194</sup>

Writing in 1947, Walsby had an idealistic view of science as the major contributor towards the amelioration of the human condition. Walsby seems to have believed that mankind's liberation from ideological thinking would be difficult to achieve through discussion or controversy. Instead he proposes to enable all ideological groups to become conscious about the assumptions and identifications that underlie their own actions. Walsby, I think, thus hoped to make possible the passage from one ideology to another and in this way to enlarge the group of "scientifically"- minded members of the community. This would eventually lead individuals and groups to free themselves of the need of living by unconsciously held ideologies.

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<sup>194</sup> Walsby, H. (1947). *The Domain of Ideologies*. Glasgow: McLellan.

Eschatologically speaking, SI is either paradoxical or includes a hidden revolutionary assumption. This is so because ideologies, according to SI, have generated society as it is and from this point of view they also have an important role in maintaining society. Knowledge about ideology as a phenomenon leads to the conclusion that parallel to maintaining society it is also necessary to have and constantly bring to bear scientific knowledge about ideologies. In this sense SI ascribes a fundamental and transformational role to the study of ideologies.

It is at this point that SI asserts its ideological assumptions and performs its identifications. It is here that it confronts a basic paradox for it might be that ideological contents blur the presence of the ideological assumptions and identifications that feed entire social, cultural and scientific theories. At the very same time, these ideological contents support life, support socio-cultural cohesion.

Socio-cultural cohesion, when attained, would encompass the entire, endless quantity of narratives that can conjugate unlimited fragments of ideological narratives deriving, among others, from instances of the Ideological Narratives introduced by Walsby and Walford. In my view, *Mirror*, as a case study, allows the conceptualization of ideologies not only as political doctrines but as the narratives interwoven in human action of any kind.

Contrary to Walsby, Walford and Lamm, I do not see how it is possible to create a science that studies ideologies as something to be combated and eventually eliminated. This stance reminds me of the medical vaccination repertoire in which, to fight the virus, one ingests it, all the while not knowing if elimination of the virus will not eliminate the bearer, too. For ideologies exist and will continue to exist among and between mundane lives and theoretical constructs of any kind. So, while paying

homage to Walsby, Walford, Lamm and the importance of their work as rationalists and early deconstructionists in the field of Ideology Critique, in my essay I will search for a different terminology while meditating on ideological reflections transmitted by and through mirrors.

What interested me most in SI was the exposition of a compound of ideological narratives that bears not only political doctrines but every construction made by women and men. SI is a narrative compounded of institutions and performances, discourse and gestures. It performs, inscribes and reflects variation, movement and temporality in a way that instead of separating the Ideological from other fields without depriving it of its autonomy, correlates its involvement in the generation, production and reproduction of socio-cultural life.

Ideology critique, even in its major efforts, does not escape Ideology or evade Mirror. Among ideology critique theories, not less that among mundane reality, mirrors produce, reproduce, disseminate and relate critical theories of Ideology. Structurally, they place themselves among and inside the diagnostic and epistemological narratives that are an inseparable part of every ideological narrative (Lamm, 2002).<sup>195</sup> In the first case Mirror, which involves exposing the way things are as if they were a scientific methodological narrative, we see an example in Lamm's reading of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, where Marx describes the state of affairs that serves a basis for imagining the desired reality. The latter appears in the "eschatological narrative" of

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<sup>195</sup> Lamm reading, among other the Communist Manifest by Marx as an ideology detected that every ideology has a structure that include four components: Diagnosis, Eschatology, Strategy and the Mass. Myself prefer to consider these components as narratives More over, Lamm also has shown how these components contribute to the Ideology effectiveness, since each of them aspire from different Cognitive Systems such as Science, Religion (specially the prophetic discourse), Pragmatics and Communication. See: Lamm, Z. (2002). *In the Whirlpool of Ideologies, Education in the Twentieth Century*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press. p. 71.

every ideology as a prophetic narrative, what can be associated with the messianic aspect of ideology referred to by Derrida in *Specters of Marx* (1994: 123-155)<sup>196</sup> (see Lamm, p. 71).<sup>197</sup> Mirror also performs as a strategic component of ideology in addition to, of course, its communicative component. But this time, not only is Mirror a medium with a message, it also functions as what Eco calls a "theater of mirrors" (1988, p. 11 )<sup>198</sup> and in a way similar to what Derrida intercepted in his reading of the commodity appearance, described in his *Specters of Marx*, as we shall see.

## **6.0 Installing ideology critique theories into the domain of Ideology:**

### **Reading Systematic Ideology through Zizek**

Zizek (1999) offers a reconstruction of the notion of ideology, centered on repeated reversals of non-ideology into ideology, or as he himself refers to it: "...of the sudden awareness of how the very gesture of stepping out of ideology pulls us back into it"...(Zizek, 1999, p. 63)<sup>199</sup>.

To this end Zizek adopts the Hegelian triad: *In-itself*, *For-Itself* and *In-and-For-itself* to analyze different types of ideological conceptualization. Zizek warns that in order to avoid a fatal misunderstanding no one of these categories is to be read as constituting a hierarchical progress, including the suppression of the preceding mode.

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<sup>196</sup> Derrida, J. (1994) *Specters of Marx* (trans. Peggy Kamuf ) New York and London, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

<sup>197</sup> Lamm, Z. (2002). *In the whirlpool of ideologies, education in the twentieth century* (p. 71). Jerusalem: The Hebrew University – Magnes Press. (Hebrew)

<sup>198</sup> Eco, U. (1988). "*De los espejos*". *De los espejos y otros ensayos*. Barcelona: Lumen.

<sup>199</sup> Zizek, S. (1999). The Spectre of Ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds), *The Zizek Reader* (pp. 53-87). London: Blackwell Publishers.

According to Žižek, an ideology-in-itself is a composite of ideas, beliefs and concepts, destined to convince us of its “truth”, yet actually serving some un-avowed power interests. The strategy of ideology critique, which Žižek calls *symptomal reading* uncovers un-avowed bias used by the ideology. Thus we can identify the gap between an ideology's meaning and its intentions, which are determined by un-avowed social interests.

In his discussion of Habermas, whom he considers the last representative of the Enlightenment, Žižek claims that just when he is on his way of stepping out of ideology, Habermas re-enters the domain of ideology by installing a critique of ideology as blurring reality and as a pathological interest (Žižek, 1999)<sup>200</sup>. This critique of ideology in itself can be identified as an ideology, one that I believe Walsby and Walford might have identified with the epidynamic ideological narrative.

Žižek's (1999, p.p. 61-68)<sup>201</sup> own definition of ideology-in-itself can be juxtaposed to what SI would identify as the epidynamic tradition, by stressing the gradual contribution of what he calls "discourse analysis". He includes Barthes' *Mythologies* (1972)<sup>202</sup> among ideologies-in-themselves for in this work ideology is considered as the "naturalization" of the symbolic order and as relating "textual procedures" to "things", i.e., to the epistemic ideology itself. Žižek situates Ducrot's (1986)<sup>203</sup> theory of argumentation in the same line of thinking: his major claim is that it is impossible to create a clear-cut distinction between the argumentative and descriptive levels of

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<sup>200</sup> Žižek, S. (1999). The Spectre of Ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds), *The Žižek Reader* (pp. 53-87). London: Blackwell Publishers.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Barthes, R. (1972) *Mythologies* (trans. Annette Levers) New York, Good Hill & Wang.

<sup>203</sup> Ducrot, O. (1986) *Le Dire et le dit*. Paris, Minuit.

language. Pecheux's (1999)<sup>204</sup> contribution, according to Zizek is regarding one of the fundamental stratagems of ideology, namely the reference to something as self-evident. The sentence: "Let the facts speak for themselves" is, according to Zizek, perhaps the arch-statement of ideology. The point is of course, precisely, that facts never "speak for themselves", but are always made to speak by a network of discursive devices. Laclau<sup>205</sup>, in his study on Fascism and populism, added the insight that meaning does not inhere in elements of an ideology as such –these elements rather function as "free floating signifiers" whose meaning is fixed by the mode of their hegemonic articulation. By way of an example, Zizek adds that ecology is never ecology as such. This argument, I suppose, Walsby and Walford would have agreed with, then to show the possible pluri-ideological declinations of the term.

Ecology, according to SI, adopts different meanings depending on the ideological construction of different practices, theories or rituals matching different assumptions and identifications. (Compare Zizek, 1989: 87-88)<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, I believe, Walsby and Walford could have linked the case of ecology to attitudes toward the cosmos, not only in the realm of politics but also in that of the sciences where assumptions and identifications feed epistemologies of "hard" scientific theories and methodologies of research generally and mundanely disconnected from the realm usually linked to ideologies.

Zizek (1999), when dealing with ideology-for-itself, refers to Althusser's Ideological Apparatuses, which situate ideology as having a material existence in ideological

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<sup>204</sup> Pecheux, MM. (1999) The Mechanism of Ideological (Mis)recognition. In Slavoj Zizek (ed.), *Mapping Ideology*. London, New York, Verso. Pp. 141-152.

<sup>205</sup> Laclau, E. (1977) *Politics and Ideology*. New York & London, Verso.

<sup>206</sup> Zizek, S. (1989) *The Sublime object of Ideology*. New York & London: Verso.

practices, rituals and institutions. Comparing Foucault's approach to Althusser's, Zizek argues that Foucault resorts "to the extremely suspect rhetoric of complexity, evoking the intricate network of lateral links, left and right, up and down...a clear case of patching up, since one can never arrive at Power this way - the abyss that separates micro-procedures from the spectre of Power remains unbridgeable" (p.66). Althusser, Zizek believes, has a better approach, when he, quite to the contrary, conceives these micro-procedures as parts of ideological state apparatuses, mechanisms that, in order to be operative, i.e., to "seize" the individual, must always already presuppose the massive presence of the state, the transference relationship of the individual with state power, or - in Althusser's own terms - with the ideological Big Other<sup>207</sup>.

Zizek's last category (of ideology-for-itself) suggests that today when the expansion of the new mass media enables ideology to penetrate every pore of the social body, the impact of ideology as such is diminished. Individuals do not act as they do primarily on account of their beliefs or ideological convictions- that is to say, the established system for the most part bypasses ideology in reproducing itself and relies on economic coercion, legal and state regulations, and so on.

Having reached this point we are still in the realm of ideology but this time and according to Zizek, not as an explicit doctrine, or articulated convictions, nor indeed in its material existence (institutions, rituals and practices that embody it). Rather, ideology now is implicit in the quasi-spontaneous moment of the reproduction of "non-ideological" (economic, legal, political, sexual, etc.) practices.

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<sup>207</sup> Zizek, S. (1999). The Spectre of Ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds), *The Zizek Reader* (pp. 53-87). London: Blackwell Publishers.

Zizek's conceptualization of ideologies mapping seems to me, although presented in a more up-to-date theoretical and sophisticated way, to resemble SI very much. I believe that this similarity originates from the two approaches' similar point of departure for they grant ideology an independent status in society by asserting that reality is the site of ideologies and not merely their distorted image (See Zizek 1989: 87-89)<sup>208</sup>. What Zizek calls proto-ideological floating signifiers are for SI part of ideologies participating in reality construction in their respectful, lawful and silent appearance (see Zizek 2003, 2006)<sup>209</sup>.

Every single ideological narrative in SI includes doctrines and institutions, rituals and practices and therefore all ideological narratives coexist simultaneously for they are installed in social reality as theories, practices, rituals, and institutions functioning as webs of significations that are hard to be discerned as such.

SI proactive strategy of critique, as a usual characteristic of the narrative of ideologies critique, doesn't step out of ideology. Quite the contrary: it assumes itself an ideology, almost stating that *homo sapiens* is "homo ideologicus", and it aspires to generate a theory to study the "thing itself". This insight of SI implies that its need for other systems of knowing which will evolve as a result of the praxis of ideology critique. In this context, SI refers to freedom as the drive that generates the seven ideological narratives. For it is by studying ideologies, or in other words, by acknowledging their contents, modalities, modes of functioning and effects, that it is assumed to be possible to gain, at least, a clue toward understanding *understanding*. Gaining

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<sup>208</sup> Zizek, S. (1989) *The Sublime object of Ideology*. New York & London. Verso p. 87

<sup>209</sup> Zizek, S. (2003) *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*. London, Cambridge, MIT Press. pp.144- 172; Zizek, S. (2006) *The parallax View*. London, Cambridge, MIT Press. pp. 330-386.

knowledge about understanding will make it possible to exercise freedom, ideologically understood as the way of facing the most constraining effect of ideology.

Zizek characterized the moment of freedom as resisting symbolization because the “morose hyper-presence of ideology” constructs freedom as a spectre, representing either a higher stratum of reality or an “endeavor to gentrify the act of freedom”, to cope with its traumatic impact. By spectre he means to suggest the positive representation of the abyss of freedom, a void that assumes the form of quasi-being.

Paraphrasing Zizek, the spectral possibility of freedom from ideology, as portrayed by SI, appears to be attainable through ideology critique. Here we find ourselves again paradoxically situated at the protostatic level where uniformity erases difference and controversy. New apparatuses and technologies like information technologies seem to emerge only to serve this inevitable and irreversible point of “more of the same” where the ideological mirroring labyrinth starts again.

## **7.0 Conjugating Ideologies**

“Images of freedom” are, then, ideologically constructed ad infinitum, each according to different and/or combined ideological narratives. Systematic Ideology offers the opportunity to read a variety of ideologies from every domain that, as we have seen, can be thematically interwoven. But what is even more interesting in this approach is that it offers the possibility of envisaging or imagining a dynamic of ideological narrative functioning. An ideology, as we have seen, is the narrative woven and interwoven in definition, identification, justification, action, discourse of things, people, social and cultural institutions and performances. It is therefore possible to

consider ideological narratives as a variety of transformations initiated when one or a number of their components, in full or in part, realign to form an ideological narrative different from yet similar to the ever-changing ideological narratives accommodated by the diachronic and synchronic dynamics characterizing their functions, and exposed in SI.<sup>210</sup> These major ideological narratives congeal within themselves all the changes taking place in each of their fragments as they perform in whatever ideological representation compound and utterance they may find themselves.

It is then that we can apperceive that ideologies conjugate and are conjugated constantly, as if "covering" or "uncovering" reality in the variety of its rhythms, in a multitude of directions and senses. In order to imagine the ideological "nature" and its way of functioning, we can borrow from Jorge Luis Borges' tale on "The Rigor of Science":

" ... In that Empire, the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that the map of one Province alone took up the whole of a City, and the map of the empire, the whole of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps did not satisfy, and the Colleges of Cartographers set up a Map of the Empire which had the size of the Empire itself and coincided with it point by point. Less Addicted to the Study of Cartography, Succeeding Generations understood that this Widespread Map was Useless and not without Impiety they abandoned it to the Inclemencies of the Sun and of the Winters. In the deserts of the West some mangled Ruins of the Map lasted on, inhabited by animals and Beggars; in the whole Country there are no other relics of the Disciplines of Geography..."<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> To a glance over the dynamics between the diachronical and synchronical axes compare with Itamar Even Zohar work on Polysystem Theory. See: <http://www.tau.ac.il/~itamarez/works/books/ez-pss1990-toc.pdf>.

<sup>211</sup> Borges, J.L. (1997) *El Hacedor*. Buenos Aires. Editorial Alianza.

We are not yet – or perhaps we have gone beyond – (in) the situation in which those who are less addicted to the Study of Ideologies stop considering and, more than that, cease performing and impersonating, a situation in which the ideological narrative's covertures and depths have become part of reality. Instead, we live by *conjugating* ideological narratives with Mirror, as a life technique (Schirmacher, 1998)<sup>212</sup>, having a key function in this practice.

*Conjugation*<sup>213</sup> includes a variety of significations that refer to generative processes on the one hand and accommodation or assimilation on the other. The first is linked to a mating process whereby the temporary union of two one-celled organisms results in the exchange of genetic material. Or, it might also be a sequence of alternating single, double (or triple) bonds, or even various sexual processes that occur in microorganisms during which gene transfer follows the establishment of direct contact between two (or more) cells that typically show little or no morphological differentiation from vegetative cells.

The second meaning refers to *conjugation's* performance in changing verb formation according to person, number and tense.

The *conjugation of ideologies* is thus linked to action (the verb), modes and temporality, that is, to specific kinds of action, taking place in time, which have important impacts on an ideological narrative, altering its attitudes toward its own strategies and how mode and time are constructed within it. Conjugation in its second meaning of performance contains one pair at least, as well as every kind of couple

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<sup>212</sup> Schirmacher, W. (1998) [Homo Generator: Media and Postmodern Technology](#). Gretchen. Bender, (ed.). *Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology*. New York, The New Press.

<sup>213</sup> Conjugation definitions:  
[http://www.google.co.il/search?hl=iw&rlz=1T4SKPB\\_enIL203IL203&defl=en&q=define:conjugation&sa=X&oi=glossary\\_definition&ct=title](http://www.google.co.il/search?hl=iw&rlz=1T4SKPB_enIL203IL203&defl=en&q=define:conjugation&sa=X&oi=glossary_definition&ct=title)

formation in addition to the genetic materials that participate in ideological reproduction.

In the conjugation of ideological narratives, Mirror has a key function for, as Eco<sup>214</sup> reveals, it is through its play as a medium, as a communication channel (see p. 26-30) that one or several narratives reflect and project on and over one other as a doubling or multiplying technology. Within the realm of ideologies narrative, Mirror is a means of transportation, transformation and communication. It facilitates remediation and translation of ideological fragments, conjugating the one with the other and the one into/out of the other; as a medium, however, it importantly impacts on the always purloined "message" of the ideologies.

Mirror is what establishes itself among the genetic/generic meetings of cultural bodies that conjugate in time and mode, establishing direct contact between two (or more) cultural bodies.

Thematically, the "need" narrative, that is, the need for ideological narrative, envisaged by Walford as by Walsby as social functions and by Geertz as needed existential nets of meaning, is linked to the human need to understand the world that surrounds us in a more or less coherent way. In this sense, ideologies are narrative nets that are behind and in front, interwoven with everything we do, think, say and so forth. Mirror, as activating among the oscillator and the distinct forms of expression and representation (Nancy, 2005)<sup>215</sup> (see pp. 62-66), is also present in ideological narratives, sometimes concealing and sometimes unconcealing itself as a technological rhetorical figure.

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<sup>214</sup> Eco, U. (1988). *“De los espejos”*. *De los espejos y otros ensayos*. Barcelona: Lumen.

<sup>215</sup> . Nancy, J.L. (2005) *The Ground of the Image* (trans. by Jeff Fort) New York, Fordham University Press.

Still, the functions of Ideology and Mirror and the attitude toward them is an important thematic cluster that encloses a broad epistemological controversy with at least two currents, activating the postmodern field of thought and socio-cultural critique. Among other things, they view and design the pedagogies through and with which this thematic cluster should be learned.

The first current refers to the attitude represented by Žižek, among others, who long ago designed the goals of ideology study in his well-known book *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989). This current prescribes three aims. The first is "to locate" Lacan's work along the rationalism's lineage because, according to Žižek, Lacanian theory is perhaps the most radical of contemporary versions of the Enlightenment. The second aim is to reactualize Hegel while the third is to contribute to the theory of Ideology through a new reading of some well-known classic motifs. Žižek considers these three aims to be deeply connected. According to his view, the only way to "save Hegel" is through Lacan since a Lacanian reading of Hegel and the Hegelian heritage opens up a new approach to Ideology allows us to grasp contemporary ideological phenomena without falling prey to "postmodern" traps (such as the illusion that we live in a "post-ideological" condition).<sup>216</sup> Žižek, as if continuing the chiasmus between Lacan and Derrida (see p. 108-115) envisages the learning about ideologies as a search for truth; he invites thinkers and readers on a pedagogical journey dedicated to discovering their own hidden (invisible, inaudible) presumptions in order to create a disturbing awareness:

"...And this is what "Short Circuits" wants to do, again and again, the underlying premise of the series is that Lacan psychoanalysis is a privileged instrument of such an approach, whose purpose is to illuminate a standard text or ideological

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<sup>216</sup> Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime object of Ideology*. New York & London. Verso. P. 7.

formation, making it readable in a totally new way- the long History of Lacanian interventions in philosophy, in religion, the arts (from the visual arts to the cinema, music and literature), ideology, and politics justifies this premise. This, then, is not a new series of books on psychoanalysis, but a series of "connections in the Freudian field" – of short Lacanian interventions in art, philosophy, theology and ideology.

"Short Circuits" intends to revive a practice of reading which confronts a classic text, author or notion with its own hidden presuppositions, and that reveals its disavowed truth. The basic criterion for the texts that will be published is that they effectuate such a theoretical short circuit. After reading a book in this series, the reader should not simply have learned something new: The point is, rather, to make him or her aware of another disturbing side of something he or she knew all the time..." (Zizek, 2006: VII).

The second theoretical attitude toward the study of Ideology is represented by those who study the Ideological (among other things and fields) through Deconstruction. It seems that Derrida has not frontally envisaged Ideology or the Ideological nor created a theory of Ideology. This does not mean, in my view, that he obviated the preoccupation with ideologies, or that he considered himself and us as living in a post-ideological epoch. Looking closely at Derrida's work, it seems that most of what he performed is linked to the Pedagogical and to the Ideological. But instead of working within these fields frontally, he adopted a position that permitted him an oblique gaze and deconstructive practice. That is, whenever he came back to revise the Ideological, instead of taking part in ideological disputes and adopting only a polemical attitude and an intrinsic ideological critique as a central practice – which Zizek does, Derrida practiced Deconstruction.

Derrida considered that it was not the time to work on a Theory of Ideology or a Science of Ideology:

"...that the fact that a theory of ideology is impossible in the strict sense of the word 'theory' (a formalisable system of objectifying theorems, the formulations of which lie outside the field of objectivity thus delimited: in other words, in the present instance a *non-ideological theory of ideology*, a theory of ideology or science of ideology, as they used to say in France thirty years ago, divested of

all ideologemes), does not necessarily have to be regarded as a negative limit or catastrophe. In the face of this, by now, classical situation, one needs, perhaps, to find a different way of thinking both the 'ideological' ... and the relationships between thought, philosophy, science ... 'theory' ... [and] what still remains to 'be done' ..."<sup>217</sup>

Instead, of formulating a non-ideological theory of Ideology, Derrida proposes that the "intellectual" of tomorrow learn from the "ghost".

And what is the "ghost?":

...*Es spunkt*: difficult to translate, as we have been saying, It is a question of ghost and haunting, to be sure, but what else? The German idiom seems to name the ghostly return but it names it in a verbal form. The latter does not say that there is some *revenant*, specter, or ghost; it does not say that there is some apparition, *der Spunk*, nor even that it appears, but "it ghosts", "It apparitions". It is a matter (*Il s'agit*), in the neutrality of this altogether impersonal verbal form, of something and someone, neither someone nor something, of a "one" that does not act. It is a matter rather of passive movement of an apprehension, of an apprehensive movement ready to welcome, but where? In the head?

What is the head before this apprehension that it cannot even contain? And what if the head, which is neither the subject, nor consciousness, nor the ego, nor the brain, were defined first of all by the possibility of such an experience, and by the very thing that it can neither contain, nor delimit, by the indefiniteness of the "es spunk? (Derrida, 1994:216).<sup>218</sup>

What appears, though imperceptibly, is the trace of a passage, of everything that has been and of the relationship of what is with what has been and what will be. Similarly to the SI way of envisaging time and ideology, no ideology really disappears; it stays on as part of itself and of others, flashing, blinking, glowing and flickering without resting in any direction or sense.

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<sup>217</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Marx & Sons', in Michael Sprinker (Ed.), *Ghostly Demarcations*. London, Verso. 1999, pp. 256–257.

<sup>218</sup> . Derrida, J. (1994) *The Specters of Marx*. (trans. Peggy Kamuf ) New York and London, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. P. 216.

But these specters, these traces of the ideological, are silenced and they are expected to talk, and if we are expected to talk with them, both of us should be granted with a voice.

The intellectual, according to Derrida, should live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or give them back their speech even if that speech is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: The specters are always there, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet and they are only imminent (Derrida, 1994: 221)<sup>219</sup>.

Mirrors are installed in order to conceal and unconceal the specter's speech. They create meeting points between them even if we didn't perceive them. For what is reflected is that mark of their presence, precisely stamped by their absence.

When visible, the specters are installed among media (text, image, sound) remediating their ghostly condition while translating (or transforming) the one (text, image, sound) and the other (text, image and sound) when assembling or, in Magritte words, "resembling" all that is remediated and translated in the public scene of Reproduction. This is why it is necessary to bring mirrors back: Mirrors star once as a technology of cultural reproduction and once as the ideologically manipulated ad infinitum figure, erasing or re-writing its (i.e., Mirror's) major function.

## **8.0 Reintroducing Derrida' Mirrors while Reading *The Specters of Marx***

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<sup>219</sup> Derrida, J. (1994) *The Specters of Marx*. (trans. Peggy Kamuf ) New York and London, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. P. xx

In his "The Specter of Ideology" (1999)<sup>220</sup>, Zizek briefly quotes Derrida as an introduction to "Lacan's precise answer" to Zizek's question: Why, then, is there no reality without the specter?:

"...In his recent book on Marx, Jacques Derrida brought into play the term "spectre" in order to indicate this elusive pseudo-materiality that subverts the classic ontological oppositions of reality and illusion, and so on..." (Zizek, 1999: 20).

The answer Zizek provides to his question relies on an essay in which a theoretical compound is created that complements the Marxian theoretical view of ideologies with Lacanian explanations of the symbolic.

Later, in 2006, Zizek, in order to place Lacan's differentiation "between the subject of the enunciated and the subject of enunciation" as if to continue the Derrida-Lacan chiasmus and invagination of borders (see p. xx), again quotes Derrida. When doing so, Zizek asserts that the point when "the Derridean fashion is fading away" is the moment to honor his memory by pointing out the proximity of this minimal difference (the non coincidence of the One with Itself) to what he called *différance*, considered by Zizek as a neologism whose very notoriety obfuscates its unprecedented materialist potential (Zizek, 2006:11).

Indeed, Zizek doesn't hide his ideological controversy with Derrida. However, at the same time, while reviving this lengthy discussion, which merely reflects some aspects of the deconstructive confrontation, Zizek seems to be performing exactly what he said he was going to evade. *Différance* leaves room for chiasmus and mirrors while it

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<sup>220</sup> Zizek, S. (1999). The Spectre of Ideology. In E. Wright & E. Wright (eds), *The Zizek Reader*, London: Blackwell Publishers. Pp. 53-87.

remediates ideological differences into a translation of its basic assumptions that, once paired or juxtaposed, will continue the specters' dance to an echoing music ad libidum. It in this precise moment that I re-call Derrida, not because he doesn't challenge Ideology (see Josephs, 2001)<sup>221</sup> but because he offers the possibility of considering Mirror, when placed among ideologies, as a way of conceiving ideology less as a doctrine and more as a set of producing, doubling and reproducing narratives that envelop from within and from outside the way we perceive ourselves and others.

### 8.1. Meeting the Mirror Specter

While reading Marx's *Das Kapital*, Derrida encounters a thing, a table and, in a theatrical moment, he describes a meeting between tables, perhaps other pieces of furniture as well and maybe even everything in the world. This meeting turns every commodity's social form into a mystery:

"...The commodity table, the headstrong dog, the wooden head faces up, we recall, *to all other commodities*. The market is a front, a front among fronts, a confrontation. Commodities have business with other commodities, these hard-headed spectres have commerce among themselves. And not only in *tête-à-tête*. That is what makes them dance, so it appears. But if the "mystical character" of the commodity, if the "enigmatic character" of the product of labour *as commodity* born of "the social form" of labour, one must still analyse what is mysterious or secret about this process, and what the secret of the commodity form is (*das Geheimnisvolle der Warenform*)..." (Derrida, *The Specters of Marx*)<sup>222</sup>.

The table and other furniture, or everything in the world encountered in the market place, reflect the one in the other but partially hide part of the thing's genealogy.

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<sup>221</sup> Joseph, J. (2001) Derrida's Specters of Ideology. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 6 (1), pp. 95 -115.

<sup>222</sup> Derrida, J. (1994) *The Specters of Marx*. (trans. Peggy Kamuf ) New York and London, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. Pp. 194-5.

It is at this moment that a substitution of roles and characters takes place. The theatrical *quid pro quo* makes its appearance – as an *abnormal play* of mirrors. It is a mirror that no longer plays its role, it is not a prosthesis any more, it no longer reflects the expected image.

Since the mirror is installed on the commodity itself yet does not reflect the expected image, the traces inscribed on the commodity are erased and made invisible. Men no longer recognize themselves in the interface of commodities for the interface does not reflect them, either. Mirror is then returned into a mysterious object that shows itself through hiding.

The artifacts' confrontation in the market, which makes Mirror reflect commodities one on the other in the invaginated place of socio-cultural production and reproduction, implies and involves chiasmus, the criss-cross interchange that makes the *quid pro quo* performance possible. But this is not a simple *quid pro quo* for it erases (or loses) the memory of its substitution function.

With doubleness (and multiplication but not substitution) installed, the *tritych technology of the mirror* composed of mise en abyme, chiasmus and metalepsis facilitates ideological narratives' contact, communication, contamination and conjugation in a variety of modalities. Sometimes it places the different versions of the same narrative in its variegated apparitions or representational forms within other narratives or other kind of representations, in abyme. At other times it posits mirror chiasms between the different and the identical, the identical and the identical and the different and the different. Reversing the hierarchy between the after and the before, confounding

diegetic levels as a sign of the temporality of the reproduction of the ideological, is the field of metaleptic performance.

Technology makes its appearance there since it is the place of interchange, of traffic and of give and take. Oscillation, then, between the socio-cultural place and Mirror would otherwise be the commodities showing and telling through their animation:

"...Thing; it is the contradiction of *automatic autonomy*, mechanical freedom, technical life. Like every thing, from the moment it comes onto the stage of a market, the table resembles a prosthesis of itself. *Autonomy and automatism*, but automatism of this wooden table that spontaneously puts itself into motion, to be sure, and seems thus to animate, animalise, spiritualize, *spiritize* itself, but while remaining an artifactual body, a sort of automaton, a puppet, a stiff and mechanical doll whose dance obeys the technical rigidity of a program. Two genres, two generations of movement intersect with each other in it, and that is why it figures the apparition of a spectre. It accumulates undecidably, in its uncanniness, their contradictory predicates: the inert thing appears suddenly *inspired*, it is all at once transfixed by a *pneuma* or a *psyche*..."(Derrida, 1994:192)<sup>223</sup>.

Human seeing capacity limitations are remediated by commodities as prostheses that not only chiasm, they include abyme, in part or entirely, the one in/or the other. This is what generates, classifies and allows their reproduction. Contamination and invagination of borders accompanies the commodities' dance. They more than converse the one with the other; they extend their colloquium to a vertiginous multi-reflective interchange.

But there is a mystery there that, contrary to Magritte's evocations of Mystery (see p.3-4), should be dissolved in order, according to Marx read by Derrida,

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid. P. 192.

to understand the secret of the commodity: The mirror is, then, what creates Mystery.

First, if following the word *mystery's* significations, a profound secret appears. That is, something wholly unknown, or something kept cautiously concealed and therefore exciting curiosity or wonder comes in view; something that has not been or cannot be explained; hence, that which is beyond human comprehension. Because part of the commodity is not reflected in the mirror, the mirror is now a concealing technology.

Second, the mirror arouses mysteries in a kind of secret religious celebration to which none are admitted except those who have been initiated with certain preparatory ceremonies. It is then that the mirror congregates those that know this mystery, but only amongst themselves.

Third, the mirror transforms the market scene into a Mystery qua dramatic representation that again performs in place of reproduction. There, the story will be told as a mystery, as a miraculous deed that unconceals the legend of the specter that accompanies tables, furniture and everything in the world within reality's landscape.

Mystery in these senses gives back some of what accompanies the performances of Mirror among ideologies, according to Marx read by Derrida: Concealment, lack of comprehension, religiosity and rituality, then the narrative dramatic representation as part of the Mirror Mystery.

But more than that, visibility's constraints and reflection's obstruction are how this mirror enhances Mystery. For commodities and humans will become

ghosts in their turn and will be incapable of seeing themselves in the mirror. Derrida explains that the proper feature of specters, like vampires, is that they are deprived of a specular image, of the true, right specular image. Then he poses the question of how is it possible to recognize a ghost? The way a ghost is recognized is by its specular image deprivation.

This is the way, according to Derrida reading Marx, that the mirror affects and effects ideologies, for ideologies are there, in the marketplace, not less than in or on commodities. Derrida says "...let us situate ourselves in that place where the value of values between use value and exchange value, secret, mystique, enigma, fetish, and the ideological form a chain in Marx's text ...." (Derrida, 1994: 186)<sup>224</sup>. It is there, in *Das Kapital*, but also in the market place. Here it is possible to add that if men come to the market together with their commodities, they carry with themselves and in themselves not only the commodities' chiasmi, but all the traces that ideologies have diachronically inscribed on them. This is how ghosts that are commodities transform human producers into ghosts and negate or distort the physical functioning of sight:

"...And this whole theatrical process (visual, theoretical, but also optical, *optician*) sets off the effect of a mysterious mirror: If the latter does not return the right reflection, if, then, it phantomalises, this is first of all because it naturalizes. The "mysteriousness" of the commodity form as presumed reflection of the social form is the incredible manner in which this mirror sends back the image (*zuruckspiegelt*) when one thinks it is reflecting for men the image of the "social characteristics of men's own labor": Such an "image" objectivises by naturalizing. Thereby, this is its truth, it shows by hiding, it reflects these "objective" (*gegenstandliche*) characteristics as inscribed right on the product of labour as the "socio-natural properties of these things" (*als gesellschaftliche Natureigenschaften dieser Dinge*). Therefore, and here the commerce among

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<sup>224</sup> Derrida, J. (1994) *The Specters of Marx*. (trans. Peggy Kamuf ) New York and London, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

commodities does not wait, the returned (deformed, objectified, naturalised) image becomes that of a social relation among commodities, among these inspired, autonomous, and automatic “objects” that are séance tables. The specular becomes the spectral at the threshold of this objectifying naturalisation: “It also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution [*quid pro quo*], the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time supersensible or social ...” (Derrida 1994: 195-6)<sup>225</sup>.

Mirror qua technology disappears in this moment of text; it then becomes spectral and its sparkling effect is erased. The metaleptical mirror, the one that could project and reflect time participation, as Magritte suggests by portraying Edward James from behind as if in passing, is negated. The contextual and synchronic narrative is thus placed imaginatively on the interface:

“...For the thing as well as for the worker in his relation to time, socialization or the becoming-social passes by way of this spectralisation. The “phantasmagoria” that Marx is working here to describe, the one that is going to open up the question of fetishism and the religious, is the very element of this social *and* spectral becoming: at the same time, by the same token....” (Derrida, 1994: 208)<sup>226</sup>]

Nancy (2005) would assert that:

“...the word *imago* designates the effigy of the absent, the dead, and more precisely, the ancestors: the dead from whom we come, the links of the lineage in which each of us is a stitch. The *imago* hooks into the cloth. It does not repair the rip of their death: it does less and more than that. It weaves, it images absence. It does not represent this absence, it does not evoke it, does not symbolize it, even though all this is there too. But, essentially, it presents absence. The absent are not there, are not “in images”. But they are imaged: Their absence is woven into our presence. The empty place of the absent as a place that is not empty, that is the image, that is, in the end, the image as place, and a singular place of what has no place here: the place of a displacement, a metaphor – and here we are again. The image calls out: “Make way! (Place!) Make way for displacement, make way for the transport!...” (Nancy, 2005; 65-66).

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid. P. 195.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. P. 208.

The marketplace is not an empty place; specters and mirrors, too, are woven into our presence in this place; it is the place for movement, for metalepsis that permits a certain permeability, a certain memory of the absent in our presence that then moves on, as Edward James's portrait, allowing and swallowing our entrance as seers that will forever be negated when seeing ourselves seeing.

Through the *tryptych technology of the mirror*, Ideology in itself, Ideology for itself and Ideology in itself and for itself multiply their mutual and reciprocal movement, the one into the other confounding not only their contents but also their functioning. Moreover, it is through this technology that the ideological bears the scientific, the religious and the philosophic. Alternatively the scientific, the religious and the philosophic bear the ideological. It is through the mirror of translation that their languages and discourses are mingled the one with the other.

According to Derrida reading of Marx, there really is (*wirklick*) a light that goes from one thing, the external object, to another, the eye: the “physical relation between physical things.” But the commodity form and the relation of value between the products of labor in which it presents itself has nothing to do with either its “physical nature” or the “thingly (material) *relations*” (*dingliche Beziehungen*) that arise from it. “It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form [*dies phantasmagorische Form*] of a relation between things” (p. 165). As we have just observed, this phantasmagoria of commerce between market things (commodities) on the *mercatus* or the *agora*, when/where a piece of merchandise (*merx*) seems to enter into a relation, to converse, speak

(*agoreuein*) and negotiate with another, corresponds *at the same time* to a naturalization of the human *socius*, of labor objectified in things, and to a denaturing, a denaturalization, and a dematerialization of the thing become commodity, of the wooden table when it comes on stage as exchange-value and no longer as use-value (Derrida, 1994).<sup>227</sup>

Direct physical vision, if it existed at all, is negated; instead, a mediated vision taken from a spectral mirror is installed. Men are those that contribute to the commerce among things so that the whole scene, stemming from the phantasmagoria created by the denaturalization and the dematerialization of the thing, includes the disappearance of the mirror. It therefore impedes seeing, recognizing or identifying the initial presence of the double in the marketplace of socio-cultural reproduction.

Derrida calls back specters. Since those are seen in their unreflected image in the mirror, he calls upon Mirror's spectral presence to appear again by identifying the spectral presence of the double in oneself and in the other, while conjugating their movements in temporality.

Gaston Gasche explains that Derrida had noted on several occasions that the reflection, the image, the double, splits what it doubles by adding the possibility of reflective duplication that must be inscribed within it; the reflected is thus divided by its reflection within itself. An original division of the reflected must double the dual relation between the double and the original if it is to lend itself to duplication at all. The originary duplication eliminates

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid. Pp. 196-7.

the possibility of establishing a last source, origin, or original, installing instead an infinite reference between originals and doubles (Gasche, 1986: 226). Doubling, according to Gasche following Derrida, is no longer derivative of present *onta* or of their totality; it is no longer a phenomenon within the world but that within which the *onta* and their images, phantasms, or simulacra carve themselves out. Parallel to this, the movement of duplication is a simultaneous opening and closing of the possibility of self-reference.

According to Silverman, Derrida's deconstructive strategy practices a "double writing." This double writing, on which he elaborates in the essay the "Double Session", indicates how writing operates in two places at once. Double writing is also a double science, a double séance, a double scene, and so forth. Double writing is the inscription of a binary oppositional structure within the general field of writing. Within that general field, with its traditional metaphysical concepts, hierarchies assert themselves. The deconstructive strategy produces and provokes an overturning or reversal of the hierarchy as affirmed within the tradition. In order to accomplish such an overturning, it is necessary to locate the relevant oppositional terms within the general field and thereby to locate the indecidables as well. A wide variety of indecidables is then identified: *communication*, which is neither what is given nor what is received; *difference*, which is neither temporal deferral nor spatial differing; *pharmakon*, which is neither remedy nor poison, neither speech nor writing; *hymen*, which is neither consummation nor virginity, neither the veil nor the unveiling; *supplement*, which is neither accident nor essence, neither an outside nor the complement of an inside, and so on. The strategy, then, is to operate at the indecidable, the interface between the "neither" and the "nor." The indecidable is not a

third term, nor is it resolvable into either of the two sides. If the text is now indecidable, it should be more readily apparent in what sense it is so.<sup>228</sup>

Mirror installed among ideologies is, then, a concealing and unconcealing technology among indecidables. It can concurrently help see, function as prosthesis, fulfill the body extension function, acquire a spectral form and withdraw behind (or beneath) the scene that it itself creates, all the while doubling and multiplying without seemingly being there.

Still, even on its withdrawal, Mirror leaves its traces as the transparent and invisible technology, absorbing and performing all the variables modes of the performance or traces it bears within itself.

Bringing back Derrida while learning about Mirror among ideologies facilitates our approach to a technology that by its very functioning, becomes invisible, loses its materiality and, simultaneously, acquires materiality. Derrida's strange mirror, the one that does not reflect, nonetheless installs a kind of twofold mirror theater. On the one hand, there is the thing itself that acquires a spectral presence neither living nor dead, present nor absent; on the other hand, we have Mirror as a specter installed among the

"...the medium of the media themselves (news, the press, telecommunications, techno-tele-discursivity, techno, tele, iconicity, that which in general assured and determines the *spacing* of public space, the very possibility of the *res publica* and the phenomenality of the political) this element itself is neither living nor dead, present nor absent: it spectralizes..."<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Silverman, H. J. "What is Textuality? Phenomenology + Pedagogy,4, (2), pp.54-64.  
<http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/articles/silverman1.html>.

<sup>229</sup> Derrida, J. (1994) *The Specters of Marx*. (trans. Peggy Kamuf ) New York and London, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. P. 63.

Instead of being considered only as a distorting instrument incising between a truth-worthy image of the real world and a fictional world or an evil instrument in the hands of social corruptors, mirrors participate as mixing devices that fictionalize reality and realize fiction. Mirrors, installed on the threshold of the mirror theater, stare at us while weaving and unweaving the relationship between three reflecting figures: *mise en abyme*, *chiasmus* and *metalepsis*. Introducing and extracting Ideology Narratives from others, advancing or relenting their temporality, interposing and criss-crossing textual, iconic, audible representations; Mirror remediates Ideology Narratives and translate (or transform) them as its major task. Its effectiveness as a medium resides precisely on its transparency.

Bringing back Derrida and his mirrors is not intended to solve by means of rejection what is considered to be one of the fundamental problems of ideological critique, specifically, the Ideology's mirror effect. Instead, bringing back Derrida and his mirrors is intended to install the ideological among the virtual possibilities offered by Magritte's mirrors as a stage from which the whirlpool, oscillation and *ilinx* continue working the inevitable task of Mirror as an always becoming technology of reality elaboration. Justice, Freedom, Equality, Human Rights and other social practices or values, linked to specific actual Cultural, Political, Social theories of life, will be ideologically elaborated *a partir* when acknowledging mirror plays among them. Zizek's studies on Ideologies and the Pedagogies offered by them continue the *chiasmus* included in Derrida's mirrors, where the other is constantly inscribed.

The effect of Mirror's interwoven position among ideologies is not a simple polyphonic or pluralist attitude toward every thing included in the ideological. Nor is it an intentional behavior or strategy, as Lamm proposes, for adopting two ideologies, at least when working on ideologies. Nor are reproductions the synonyms (or other

representations) for the different concepts used by different political movements in constructing their doctrines (see Walford, 1999: 10). Movement of any kind – not solely political movement – is what accompanies the ideological. The oscillating movement between narratives conjugating one with the other and the other with the other populates a limitless repertoire of ever-changing narratives. The *triptych mirror technology*, including its decomposing movements, plays with inclusion/exclusion, confrontation/complementation and the multi-directional time transpositions crossing diegetic levels; it activates and is activated by the Mirror dance. In Derrida reading Marx, Mirror is inscribed in the borrowed table and in every commodity and person.

Magritte's *triptych mirror technology* dance renders back the mirror from its spectral situation, from its material withdrawal from the Ideology Narratives that inhabit mundane, philosophical, scientific and religious life in an unlimited contamination that represents their blurred differences and makes their pristine presence impossible.

There is no possibility for a single Ideological Narrative. Protostatic ideological functions such as survival spread throughout the Ideological Narratives of SI. SI as a whole represents an ideological apparatus, describing change narratives as they change in response to the always limiting performance of the ideological. This last narrative, the basic presumption of SI, the one that envisages a better future without Ideology, is what the *triptych mirror technology* renders back as a nostalgic longing for the one: The one that is correct, the one that is true, the one that coheres, the one that is not deformed or deforming; in short, the indivisible longing for the One.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> . See for instance the Badiou reading of Deleuze on "The One": "...The event is the ontological realization of the eternal truth of the One, the infinite power (*puissance*) of Life. It is no way a void, or a stupor; separated from what becomes. To the contrary, it is the concentration of the continuity of life, its intensification. The event is that which donates the One to the concatenation of multiplicities. We could advance the following formula: in becomings, the event is the proof of the One of which these

Mirror extends out from Magritte's painting. It has joined reality by coming out of the illusionary possibility of sur-realism.

By and through translation, Mirror encrusted in the passage from language to language, discourse to discourse, person to person, country to country, culture to culture, landscape to landscape, body to body, identity to identity, idiosyncrasy to idiosyncrasy, time to time, plays its specular function, as suggested by Magritte' *La Reproduction Interdite*, as a resembling, transporting and communicating technology. The mirror of translation, from its place among ideologies, activates technology by transporting ideological fragments from one Ideological Narrative to the other and by effectuating the thematic, linguistic, rhetorical, syntactic, stylistic changes that conform different and differing Ideological Narratives.

Parallel to translation, the mirror remediates among different objects and representations, in this way performing their transformative function. Learning of the ideological, repudiation, revolution, reform, amelioration, conservation and survival mingles one with the other, generating and conjugating the one with the other into different and differing versions imagined and textualized in different and differing media.

The political lesson of this situation is that political wings are not exclusively conservative and not exclusively revolutionary. The two are infected by one another.

The oscillator and the distinct, text and image, participate in these mechanics, which metaliptically conform signification layers by mixing times and temporalities.

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becomings are the expression. This is why there is no contradiction between the limitless of becoming and the singularity of the event. The event reveals in an immanent way the One of becomings, it makes becoming this One. The event is the becoming of becoming: the becoming (-One) of unlimited becoming..." Badiou, A. (2007) *The Event in Deleuze* (trans. Jon Roffe), *Parrhesia* 2, pp. 37-44.

Marie Laure Ryan<sup>231</sup>, as if relating to these mechanisms of modes and media mingling, asserts that any hierarchical system can be trumped, whether the levels are rhetorical or ontological, visual or musical, social or technological, spatial or temporal, semantic or cognitive. According to Ryan, Hofstadter's discussion of the strange loop phenomenon brilliantly demonstrates that metalepsis occurs not only in the arts but also in logic, mathematics, language and science. When it affects these disciplines, metalepsis carries far more disturbing epistemological consequences than does the playful subversion of narrative logic. For even if the metaleptic processes do not necessarily invalidate logic, mathematics and the scientific method, they certainly raise troubling questions about the limits of these modes of thinking.

## **9. Glances toward the mirrors' tain, mirrors in depth and mirror in veils**

Seen in the cultural scene through Magritte in *La Reproduction Interdite* and Derrida who brought back Specters, mirrors reproduce while materializing and spectralizing.

Mirror mediates the discourse established when the blurred differences between the original and the copy, the inside and the outside, the whole and its parts, the past, the present and the future are installed in an indissoluble confusion. This same confusion proposes a complementary mirror to the gallery of mirror figures whose generative and reproductive capacities mingle. This mirror does not reflect exact copies or

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<sup>231</sup> Ryan M.L. (2006). *Avatars of Story: Narrative Modes in Old and New Media*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, series Electronic Mediations.

doubles. It enlarges and minimizes, calls and reflects double, confounds time as tenses are confused. Its mirror images, too, enlarge and minimize, turn up the down and down the up. Such a mirror conserves mystery in all its significations, but especially in its signification as a craft (of mirroring) or a technology.

The *mirrors triptych technology*, facilitating projections and introjections within and from mirrors through mise en abyme, criss-crossing sides and directions by chiasmi, transgressing time, levels and modes, are accompanied by the metalepsis that moves us toward the mirror's other side. Is Edward James walking out of *The Portrait* as if walking to the other side of the mirror or is this mirror bereft of another side? "In those days, the world of mirrors and the world of men were not, as they are now, separate and unconnected", writes Borges in his "Animals that live in the mirror"<sup>232</sup>:

They were, moreover, quite different from one another; neither the creatures nor the colors nor the shapes of the two worlds were the same. The two kingdoms –the specular and the human – lived in peace, and one could pass back and forth through mirrors. One night, however, the people of the mirror invaded this world. Their strength was great, but after many bloody battles, the magic of the Yellow Emperor prevailed. The Emperor pushed back the invaders, imprisoned them within the mirrors, and punished them by making them repeat, as though in a kind of dream, all the actions of their human victors. He stripped them of their strength and their own shape and reduced them to mere servile reflections. One day, however, they will throw off that magical lethargy....

The first to awaken shall be the Fish. In the depths of the mirror, we shall perceive a faint, faint line, and the color of that line will not resemble any other. Then, other forms will begin to awaken. Gradually they will become different from us; gradually they will no longer imitate us; they will break through the barriers of glass or metal, and this time they will not be conquered. Water-creatures will battle alongside mirror-creatures.

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<sup>232</sup> Borges, J.L. ( 2005) *Animals that live in the Mirror, The Book of Imaginary Beings* (trans. Andrew Hurley). USA, Viking Books. Pp. 18-19.

Borges caps his fable with a thrilling flourish: "In Yunnan province, people speak not of the Fish but rather of the Tiger of the Mirror. Others believe that before the invasion, we will hear, from the depths of the mirrors, the sound of arms."

Basing his description on what is known about mirrors, Borges delineates an illusionary mirror. The mirror in this tale does not reproduce shape and colors. It is permeable and serves more as a threshold than as an interface. It contains a world of its own, which differs from the human world. Moreover, permeability, depth and transference exist between two worlds, seen from the two sides of the mirror. Peace reigns between the worlds from the two sides of the mirror, as if accepting the existence of the one and the other.

One day, the creatures inside the mirror decide to unbalance the idyllic common life they have shared with humans and, even though they fought bravely, they lose the war and are condemned to be the others' shadow. This punishment, the punishment of the Yellow Emperor, is what provided the origin of the mirror as a reflecting device, a device without a life of its own that imprisoned men in their own dependence. Not only did the animals inside the mirror imitate men, but men now depended on what happened on the mirror, inducing imitation while guarding against what could exude from its depths. Mirror only reflected men; all other presences were erased when threatening to regain independence at any given minute. Nevertheless, Mirror still let people perceive the source of its own genealogy – though vaguely. That source included lived experience, reflected in the potentiality of a second (and infinite) life: The annunciating sound of another and different world with forms, shape and colors of its own.

Foucault, in his *Order of Things*<sup>233</sup>, quoted this story by Borges to illustrate the idea of possible alternative worlds and alternative orders while blurring the differences of possible knowledge origins in relation to mirror (see p. 23), to utopia and heterotopia:

"...The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there, where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also the heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: It makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there..."<sup>234</sup>

Transpassing mirror toward the "Tain on the Mirror" is what Gasche,<sup>235</sup> reading Derrida, proposes is required in order to "read the system" of what he considers to be the infrastructures that command Mirror's play and determine the angles of reflection. Identifying this phenomenon by what Gasche calls "commands" – instead of dissemination – is a kind of inexact translation, a misunderstanding or deviation, contradictory to what Derrida presumably was performing in his essay.

Derrida remarked that dissemination writes itself on the other side of the mirror, on the tain of the mirror, where "accidents" produce a kind of semantic mirage.

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<sup>233</sup> Foucault, M. (1994) *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*. New York, Vintage.

<sup>234</sup> Foucault, M. (1986). Text/Context of other spaces (J. Miskowicz, Trans.) *Diacritics* 16(1), 22-27.

<sup>235</sup> . Gasche, R. (1986) *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press. P. 238.

Identifying commands is like fixing what should be let to continue in its movement.

And indeed,

according to Derrida:

"...deviance of meaning from its reflection-effect in writing sets something off  
it is a question of remarking a nerve, a fold, an angle that interrupts totality: In  
a certain place, a place of well-determined form, no series of semantic  
valences can any longer be closed or reassembled ... the lack and the surplus  
can never be stabilized in the plenitude of a form... (Derrida, 1982: 45-46).<sup>236</sup>

Edward James, in walking toward the tain of the mirror, let the observer come  
forward instead of him. Borges depicted the possibility of men's reflections differing  
from them by acquiring new shapes, colors and forms in the depths of the mirror.  
Foucault double- spaced where gaze organizes and disperses itself in some possible  
directions: either a virtual or a surreal situation, where the caesura of the double takes  
place and where it differentiates itself from itself.

As for myself, writing the "concluding remarks" on "Mirror's triptych technology:  
Remediation and Translation Figures", and leaving the intensity of essay thinking and  
writing on Mirrors has been an experience accompanied by a mourning gesture of  
farewell. I presume that after Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of  
Edward James*, a figural imagination of the mirror as the triptych technology of  
Mirror has taken shape.

Disclosing this figural imagination has been a work in place and time that now  
commences its withdrawal. It is a moment when, contrary to Badiou's

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<sup>236</sup> Derrida, J.( 1982) *Positions* (trans. Alan Blass). Chicago, Chicago University Press.

differentiation<sup>237</sup> between Heidegger's *aletheia* and *techne* (the one as truth and the other as understanding, cognition and science), I would like to combine between the two, to mix truth and understanding in cognition. In this work, some mirror figures were repeated albeit posited differently from their usual positions. More precisely, I would like to join the double movement intercepted by Shirmacher (1998):

"...[N]o revealing without concealing....Revealing deconstructions opens up; it tears the fabric of the known. Revealing through media brings back the body in amazement, acknowledging how the fundamental changes in our lifeworld are taking form through media..."<sup>238</sup>.

Gaining the one (supplemental knowledge) while losing the other (what is lost when gaining this knowledge) involves a kind of mourning that perhaps should not surprise when considering the ambivalent and multidirectional movement of the *trptych technology of Mirror* that, together with Edward James's portrait, the blinking, sparkling, illuminating, spectral and mysterious play of mirrors closes with an added unconcealing.

Mirror figure: The chiasmic, en abyme and metaleptical mirror technology that affects its own revelation by veiling the mirror while accelerating its reproductive performance.

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<sup>237</sup> "...Our epoch is most certainly the epoch of rupture, in light of all that Lacoue-Labarthe has shown to depend on the motive of mimesis. One of the forms of this motive which explicitly attaches truth to imitation is to conceive of truth as a relation, a relation of appropriateness between the intellect and the thing intellected. A relation of adequation which always supposes, as Heidegger very well understood, the truth to be localizable in the form of a proposition. Modern philosophy is a criticism of truth as adequation. Truth is not limited to the form of judgment. Heidegger suggests that it is a historic destiny. I will start from the following idea: Truth is first of all something new. What transmits, what repeats, we shall call knowledge. Distinguishing truth from knowledge is essential. It is a distinction already made in the work of Kant, between reason and understanding, and it is as you know a capital distinction for Heidegger, who distinguishes truth as *aletheia*, and understanding as cognition, science, *techne*. *Aletheia* is always properly a beginning. *Techne* is always a continuation, an application, a repetition. It is the reason why Heidegger says that the poet of truth is always the poet of a sort of morning of the world. I quote Heidegger: 'The poet always speaks as if the being was expressed for the first time.' If all truth is something new, what is the essential philosophic problem pertaining to truth? It is the problem of its appearance and its becoming. Truth must be submitted to thought not as judgment or proposition but as a process in the real. This schema represents the becoming of a truth..." Badiou, A. (2002) *On the Truth Process: An open lecture by Alan Badiou*. <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/badiou/badiou-truth-process-2002.html>.

<sup>238</sup> Schirmacher, W. (1998) *Homo Generator: Media and Postmodern Technology*. Gretchen Bender, (ed.). *Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology*. New York: The New Press.

I am not a religious person but I have found that the relationship between mirrors and mourning as it exists in Jewish tradition is an opportunity to relate to the feeling of leaving a work and the work itself. No clear or precise origin has been found for the ritualistic custom of covering mirrors in the seven days of mourning, the "*Shiva*".

Some rabbinical explanations about this tradition relate specifically to the covering of mirrors, which began as a superstition referring to the possibility– or fear – that the deceased's spirit might become trapped in the mirror. They seem to presage Derrida's *Ghosts*, to whom we should learn to talk.

But at the same time, by concealing from Mirrors their clear performative potentiality of reproduction, they lose their conjugating power since covered mirrors act as reminders from the *Halacha*<sup>239</sup> to refrain from marital intimacy during the *Shiva*: No reproduction, no doubling, no multiplication of forms or narratives.

Covered, again concealing their potentiality, mirrors re-enter the figural resemblance recycled in culture from the beginning: Mourners must be taught to cover their mirrors in order to remind them to look to others for sympathy and not to expect to be a tower of self-reliance and strength. The *Shiva* is considered a time to look inward at the deepest parts that hurt, when superficial answers and the mirror's reassurance of "you look like you're holding up well" do not help. A mirror-free home, according to this tradition, keeps personal vanity out of sight, a considerate gesture since the deceased can no longer achieve physical beauty.

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<sup>239</sup> *Halakah*: Talmudic literature that deals with law and the interpretation of the laws as found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

<http://www.wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>.

Finally, concealing mirrors is considered an attempt to diminish the Divine Presence in this world for each person is created in the image of God. Each loss diminishes this image, so to speak. Covered mirrors reflect this loss.

From among the veils of concealing new old mirror figures from popular rituals  
Mirror appears again:

\* \* \*

"...Imitation is an effective and robust way to learn new traits by utilizing the knowledge already possessed by others. The past twenty years have seen a renewed interest in imitation in various fields of research such as developmental psychology, experimental studies of adult social cognition, and most important, neurophysiology and neuropsychology (Prinz and Meltzoff, 2002). Research in this last field had led to the exciting discovery of *mirror neurons* The neurons, found in the ventral premotor cortex (area F5) in monkeys, discharge both when the monkey performs an action and when it observes another individual producing a similar action (Gallese et al., 1996; Rizzolatti et al., 2001)<sup>240</sup>. An analogous mechanism, whereby cortical motor regions are activated during movements observations was also demonstrated in humans using TMS, MEG, EEG, and MRI (e.g., Iacoboni et al., 1999)<sup>241</sup>. Imitation of motor skills requires the capacity to match between the visual perception of a demonstrator's action and the execution of a motor command. The neural mirror system, demonstrating an internal correlation between the representations of perceptual and motor functionalities may form one of the underlying mechanisms of imitative ability. Learning by imitation has already been applied by researchers in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics in various experiments....."

"...Can emerging mirror neurons help predict the actions of others? We hope that further extensions of this basic model will allow us to obtain testable predictions

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<sup>240</sup> Gallese, V., Fadiga, L., Fogassi, L., & Rizzolatti, G. (1996). Action recognition in the premotor cortex. *Brain*, 119, pp. 593–609.

<sup>241</sup> Iacoboni, M., Woods, R., Brass, M., Bekkering, H., Mazziotta, J., & Rizzolatti, G. (1999). Cortical mechanisms of human imitation. *Science*, 286, pp. 2526–2528.

regarding imitative behavior in humans and primates, and shed new light on some of the key issues concerning perception, internal representation and cognition...."<sup>242</sup>

## **10. Mirror triptych technology: chiasmus, mise en abyme and metalepsis oscillating between mimesis and methexis**

Mirror's figural imaginations have spread widely along the length of human history.

A *mirror's triptych technology*, composed of three mirrored figures, each of which has individually been suggested by different mirror figures in the past, appears as an innovative mirror figure in Magritte's' *La Reproduction Interdite: The Portrait of Edward James*. The description, explicative and implicative analysis of this finding has been the central preoccupation of this work.

More precisely, identification of the mirror's triptych technology means that the apparition of a mirrored figure conjointly effectuates, in unison, what each of its component mirrors performs alone. This combination of three mirrors in a new mirror furthers more than these mirrors' visual effects. The mirror's triptych technology includes *chiasmus*, the performance of criss-cross movements between opposing sides in a variety of directions; it adds a mirror that positions, *en abyme*, parts or entire reflections vis-à-vis each other; moreover, it incorporates a mirror that changes the directions of causality, time and directionality.

This new mirror entails one of the technologies participating in cultural processes of transformational reproduction, such as remediation and translation. Each of these is considered in its wider sense: All that is mediated from medium to medium and all that is translated from place to place, language to language, country to country, person to person, genre to genre, mode to mode and so forth.

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<sup>242</sup> Borenstein, E. & Ruppin, E. (2005) The evolution of imitation and mirror neurons in adaptive agents, *Cognitive Systems Research* 6, pp. 229–242.

With the mirror's triptych technology, reproduction evades redundant signification and acquires a sense of the instability that transforms the senses; this instability characterizes movements that derange the possibility of a sole automatic reflection. In this context, the three mirrored figures correlate one with the other without any premeditated order. The more they gain in velocity and rhythm, the more they introduce, maintain and accelerate multilayered and perpetual relationships. Going back and forth, containing the one in the other, distancing the one from the other, losing the sense of difference between the original and its copy, transporting the one into the other, confounding the individual and the duplicate, identical to itself and at the same time differing, until any similarity between the reflector and the reflected is lost, one in the other. Relationships lose stability when in perpetual motion, that is, they initiate and participate in movements that prevent any possibility of dialectical determinism.

More than mysterious or paradoxal, the mirror's triptych technology installs itself as a technology that is itself original and reproductive. It is original in its reproductability; it reproduces its originality. Each mirrored figure composing the mirror's triptych technology bears its genealogy. In this sense, each mirror is an original device that in its twofold functionality – qua technology and figure – implicates reflections and duplications, multiplications; it illuminates and contaminates originals as well as reproductions and is illuminated and contaminated by them. Criss-crossing, containing and sending back and forward have a long history in the story of human sight and reflection, which has considered singularities transformed into pluralities in a multiplicity of modalities through different mirrors. Three mirrors, bearing the singularity of each in their unique way of creating plurality, generate infinite and uncountable pluralities as they generate a "singular" mirror.

Mirror's triptych technology remediates origin and reproduction as it translates senses, directions and tenses, melting the one into the other, losing and conserving originality-reproductability.

With the mirror's triptych technology, the mirror of mimesis transforms its dance while endlessly playing, like interminable waves of water, with profundity; it interchanges directions, times and senses. Instead of repeating the verosimilarity of an imagined copy of reality, the mirror of mimesis acquires virtuality. *Mise en abyme*, *metalepsis* and *chiasmus* confound performance by adding a means for considering the undecidable. They maintain an endless play of the one with the other, in the other as itself and the other of the other.

Mirror's triptych technology moves and is moved by *methexis*, a field evoked by Nancy (2007) as participation, contagion (contact), contamination and metonymic continuity rather than metaphoric transference. Such is the consequence – or what follows the appearance of a mirror – that installs, in *abyme*, the mirror's play with time's reversibility, the possibility of inclusion and counterpoint between mirrors and what is reflected in them. In this way mirror enters what is reflected in it and endlessly reflects itself in various directions.

Mirror's triptych technology thus installs itself in the cultural scene. It swallows human activity while mixing and distributing its figures through all the senses. Spectral appearances participate in this endless play. Confounded specters and activities open virtual potentialities of conjugation, narrating the what, the when, and the why of human action.

Mirror's triptych technology installs a theoretical component whose genealogical background is grounded in deconstruction. It offers a rhetorical device in addition to the dynamics of its functionality.

Virtuality as the unexpected version of reality, the horizon of possible projection, is another dimension of the mirror's triptych technology. Unstable while changing senses, tenses and directions, the mirror's triptych technology repeats while it rhythmically transforms all that it reflects and is reflected in it in perpetual mobility. Has it ever been otherwise?

Is it possible to perceive what it presents as virtual without considering its verosimilitude? Does the verosimilitude of our narratives of life include the virtual? What would Manheim said? Is Utopia figurable without Ideology, or vice versa? Is Ideology figurable without Utopia?

When tracing possible worlds, Derrida used to coin new words in order to decongest the crowded traffic of undecidables. This is how that *a venir* in his terms marked the time to come: The more that is unknown/known, the more of the future that can be considered part of the present and the past. Mirror's triptych technology offers itself as a figure as well as a possibility of play with the Derridian *a venir*; it is only a question of disposition and the joy of doing what is needed to participate in the adventure of entering an illinx game and getting a little lost among the beauty of the triptych technology's shining, glittering and destabilizing appearances.

Mirror qua *prothèse* devolves from the mirror specter. Magritte's mirror play offers the possibility of installing what Baudelaire-Poe-Baudelaire poetically and unpoetically suggested and performed by writing their biographical itineraries. Magritte devolves them and their spectral images. With them he installs the mirror specter with a volume and potency that will perhaps converse and facilitate, even if for the blink of an eye, with the general figurative imagery that mirror carries within itself, metalepsing, perhaps forever, what we have learnt till now.

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