Exploring the imagination in the wake of Surrealism

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Chapter 1: Introducing the imagination in the wake of Surrealism

In this thesis I aim to explore various interrelated facets of human imaging and imagining using the literary and artistic movement, French Surrealism, as a catalyst for this investigation. I propose Surrealism, with its emphasis on highly imaginative and challenging artistic creations, can be a valuable springboard for studying human imaging and imagining capabilities and activities, both artistic and non-artistic.

For a period of approximately two decades, Surrealism was one of the dominant movements of the modernist avant-garde in Europe.[1] Although situated, diachronically, within the modernist avant-garde, the Surrealist movement followed its own historical trajectory. In contrast to what one could term Greenbergian 'mainstream modernism', and its predominantly formalist rush toward aesthetic autonomy in the various forms of non-figurative expressionism, constructivism, and minimalism, and the search for aesthetic purity, Surrealism was interested in researching the roots of the imagination, in the subconscious and dreaming.[2]

The surrealist period style or time-current took form and solidified into the French Surrealist movement with the publication of André Breton's *First Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924.[3] Various authors, including Theodor Adorno in his 1956 essay *Looking back on Surrealism*, remark on the fact that French Surrealism did not survive the Second World War. Reasons given for this termination include the fact that most of the group's members no longer resided in Paris, having become exiles in America during the war, and since the changes in bourgeois society that they had called for, after the destruction of the Great War, no longer applied (Adorno 1992: 87).[4]

Therefore, the French movement can be described as having a reasonably well-defined beginning and ending. Nevertheless, Breton remarks in the *First* as well as the *Second Manifesto* that even if no one remained to call themselves Surrealists the movement would

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[1] Cf. Poggioli (1968), Calinescu (1977), Bürger (1984).

[2] Abstraction, grounded in the early twentieth century work of Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky, was, according to Cheetham (1991: xi) the most daring and challenging development to occur in Western painting since the Renaissance. Abstraction, or the search for the aesthetic ideology of purity, had crucial consequences for all aspects relating to art – for art 'itself', its creation and embodiment, as a model for society, and – closely related – for art as a political force (Cheetham 1991: 104).

[3] When I am referring to the core French group the terms 'Surrealism' or 'Surrealist' will be spelled with a capital 'S'. I indicate the broader 'surrealist' dynamic or time-current, and the wake of 'surrealism', by using a lowercase 's'.

[4] Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School were also exiled in America, until eventually becoming disenchanted with the so-called progressive free West, and returning to Germany.

still be alive and endure (Breton 2010: 35, 129).[5] Maurice Nadeau, Surrealism's premier historian, allows that the movement might have failed in achieving the societal revolution it had called for, but denies that it is dead, believing the surrealist attitude or mind-set to be "eternal" (Nadeau 1965: 35).

Consequently, I posit that the ramifications and legacy of the movement are still observable today. In the movement's unique reflection on the imagination and imaginative image creation, and in its singular approach to functions of imagining, Surrealism's impact is still evident. Therefore, following the example of Richard Kearney's *The wake of the imagination: ideas of creativity in Western culture* (1988), with its exploration of the multiple metaphorical meanings of 'wake' I explore Surrealism's 'wake' – a vigil held at the movement's passing, but also its aftereffects and reverberations – by tracing a cluster of women surrealists active in Latin-America, and lastly by investigating select artists in the South African context.

My investigation differs from, for example an artist's monograph, since my approach is based in a digital archive. Since I am never in the presence of the artworks which I interpret in this study, I develop a device for art historical interrogation, based on the eventful and affective power of images. This exploration of the imagination into Surrealism's wake will therefore also function as a 'pilot study', to determine the viability of my method for image hermeneutics.

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[5] The term 'surrealist' has indeed become an accepted and enduring critical epithet and there has also been a revival of curatorial interest in surrealism as indicated by several recent exhibitions. Reviews of a few of these can be found at:

Bauduin, T. 2010. Surrealism und Wahsinn [Surrealism and Madness]. Sammlung Prinzhorn, Heidelberg, 26 November 2009 - 14 February 2010. *Papers of Surrealism*. http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal8/acrobat%20files/Exhibition%20reviews/Tessel%20FINAL%2017_05_10.pdf. [Accessed 13 June 2015].

Heddaya, M. 2014. Reconstructing the legacy of Surrealism. *Hyperallergic*. http://hyperallergic.com/156482/reconstructing-the-legacy-of-surrealism/. [Accessed 13 June 2015].

Lauson, C. 2005. Pin-up: contemporary collage and drawing, Tate Modern, London, 4 December 2004 – 30 January 2005. *Papers of Surrealism*. http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal3/acrobat_files/PinUp.pdf. [Accessed 13 June 2015].

Lavie, J. 2010. The subversion of images. Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 23 September 2009 - 11 January 2010, Fotomuseum Winterthur, 26 February - 23 May 2010, Instituto de Cultura Fundació Mapfre, Madrid, 16 June - 12 September 2010. *Papers of Surrealism*. http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal8/acrobat%20files/Exhibition%20reviews/Lavie%20FINAL%2017_05_10.pdf. [Accessed 13 June 2015].

Liversidge, A. 2013. Revelatory drawings: Morgan shows basic drafts of Surrealism. *Talk in New York*. http://www.talkinnewyork.com/drawings-morgan-shows-basic-drafts-of-surrealism. [Accessed 13 June 2015].

Villareal, I. 2015. 'Surreal roots: from William Blake to André Breton' opens as Modern Two in Edinburgh. *Artdaily.org*. http://artdaily.com/news/77443/-Surreal-Roots--From-William-Blake-to-Andr--Breton--opens-at-Modern-Two-in-Edinburgh#.VXxCcvmqqkp. [Accessed 13 June 2015].

I aim to appropriate and expand W.J.T Mitchell's notion of "hypericons" (Mitchell 1986: 5) to develop the method I term 'hypericonic dynamics'. In developing Mitchellian hypericons into the notion of hypericonic dynamics, I propose, in the vein of Harold Bloom's notion of misprision, to 'misread' Mitchell "so as to clear imaginative space" (Henderson & Brown 1997), so that I might myself productively 'play' with the notion of hypericons, so as to elaborate its hermeneutic potential as a critical as well as interrogative art historical concept. In my expansion I turn to Dario Gamboni's conception of 'potential images', and I incorporate Michael Baxandall and Thierry du Duve's respective views on artworks' implicit directive to be looked at. Lastly, I expand Mitchell's hypericons in collaboration with Paul Ricoeur's reflections regarding the power of images and Joan Ramon Resina's notion of after-images.

The hypericonic dynamic, or as I also refer to it, the 'hypericonic event', highlights the cooperative imaging and imagining eventfulness in the interaction between artist and spectator, mediated by artworks – in particular the nascent actions, practices, and activities of the imagination, as Mitchell (1986: 5) describes in *Iconology*. Hence, the hypericonic event is performed and actualised as imaging and after-imaging events between the spectator and the painting-as-picture.

I specifically use depictions of the temptation of St Anthony to illustrate hypericonic dynamics since it was a recurrent theme among the Surrealists and, as I show, depictions of the legend, historically, have either tormenting or seductive affective powers. The distinction between pictures and images is also activated by depictions of the temptation of St Anthony, since St Anthony also saw 'images' in the form of visions, apparitions, and spectres. St Anthony depictions are therefore appropriate to illustrate the difference between images and pictures as well as the eventful after-imaging reverberations activated by paintings which exert an affective image power.

One of the ways in which the Surrealists expanded their reflections on the imagination was through their use and exploitation of the often subconscious and involuntary functions of the imagination. This interest is paralleled in their strategies of artistic creation where the directed and consciously controlled, rational-thinking hand of the artist is not involved. These techniques, which are not planned or intended, but rather unconsciously and subconsciously guided, are clearly not methods of creative artistic *poiesis* as in the classical Greek sense of construction or *construire* (Jauss 1982: 604). Rather, in the more unconventional, anti-traditional, revolutionary manner of Surrealist image creation, it is the chance, accidental, unintended discovery, and unplanned guidance of the unconscious and subconscious which is emphasised.

In light of the above the cardinal systematic differences between imagination understood in a basic or universal sense and, on the other hand, the specialised and trained functioning of creative artists' imagination should be noted and respected. Acts of imagining, as a common human capacity, operate in an unconscious and supportive manner in wide-ranging everyday events, whether with minimal or enriching import. I propose that the latter domain of the human life of the imagination below the threshold of consciousness is where the enduring contribution of Surrealism may be situated.

Furthermore, the imaging and after-imaging operation of the hypericonic dynamic takes place between voluntary and involuntary, and conscious and unconscious modes of seeing. The subconscious working of the imagination is therefore central for the hypericonic event to transpire. I should note, however, that I reject, to a certain extent, the Surrealist's belief that it is only the subconscious actions and operations of the imagination which are of any creative value.

The subconscious and involuntary working of human imagination is also central to the legend of St Anthony. The legend and depictions of the temptation of St Anthony activate the question whether the visions and apparitions tormenting and seducing the saint were real or illusory. Were they really sent by Satan to tempt St Anthony, or were they dreams or hallucinations? The Surrealist's contribution to this quandary was the realisation that such images are the creations of the imagination, although often working subconsciously.

A last reason why I specifically appropriate depictions of the temptation of St Anthony, and also partly why I surmise the legend and its depictions might have fascinated the Surrealists, is because the imaginary fictive casts of the mystical and picaresque holding patterns direct many of the historical visual depictions, and these holding patterns also resonated with members of Surrealism.

In this introductory chapter I utilise an analysis of Diego Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* (Figure 1) as a primer of what may be termed 'hypericonic analysis'. I have chosen Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* as a key example painted not only in the wake of Surrealism, but importantly, in its non-European wake, and as an artwork consistent with fictive typiconic holding patterns I associate with Surrealism. Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* also displays 'characteristics' of the Surrealist 'poetic image', juxtaposing disparate worlds, which is why I situate this depiction in the wake of Surrealism. I view Rivera's painting as a touchstone which relates to all the chapters of this dissertation; I analyse this key example within this introductory chapter, rather than the next chapter with its specific focus on the temptation narrative, as a key image which resonates with all the subsequent images discussed.

Therefore, I employ *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* to tease out key conceptual terms which I deploy as I explore the imagination in the wake of Surrealism. These central concepts are surrealist 'poetic images', shared imagining, and hypericonic dynamics. It is in the juxtaposition of disparate worlds, depicted in surrealist 'poetic images', that I first experienced the ignited spark of the power of images, or hypericonic dynamics. I view the operation of hypericonic dynamics as living image events which occur between artists, artworks, spectators and their topical cultural imaginaries – thus in the domain of shared imagining. As an acknowledged literary and artistic movement, Surrealism comprised what I term a 'shared imagining community' – including the insider members of the movement proper as well as spectators and supporters in the expanded artworld, and continuing on into Surrealism's wake. The eventful nature of hypericonic dynamics operate within this shared imaginary.

The last conceptual term I unpack is hypericonic dynamics, the image hermeneutical interrogative device I develop throughout this dissertation. This exploration into Surrealism's wake afforded me the opportunity to develop this art historical tool since my approach is grounded in digital archiving, which means I was[am?] never in the physical or material presence of the artworks analysed. Surrealism proved especially fruitful in elaborating and expanding upon Michellian hypericons since surrealist 'poetic images' were specifically meant to be shocking to their bourgeois audience, even if such artworks have since lost their shock value (Bürger 1984: 57).

Perhaps the most significant contribution of Surrealism to my development of hypericonic dynamics is located in the members of the movement's high regard for the imagination and the functions, actions and activities of imagining. The emergent operations of the imagination in image creation, which include playing and dreaming, curiosity and wonder, and surprise and discovery, are central to Surrealist artistic practice and to the working of hypericonic dynamics.

These key ideas will also serve as guidelines in my investigation into select artists from a cluster of women surrealists which flourished in Mexico following the Second World War, and which I aim to expand to key representative artists in the contemporary setting in South Africa.

1.1   Diego Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio*

Diego Rivera did not refer to himself as a Surrealist – he was never a member of Bretonian French Surrealism.[6] Rivera and Breton did, however, know each other as revolutionary

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[6] Diego Rivera was not unfamiliar with European artistic developments, spending time in Spain, Belgium, England, Italy, and notably, Paris. He stayed in Europe for four years from 1909, during which time Europe saw

comrades. Breton even visited Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Mexico (Zingg 2012: 1-2). Rivera, as one of Mexico's *los tres Grande,* had a radical and original personal style, painting revolutionary murals for nearly five decades.[7] It is likely this imaginatively 'radical' trait that he shared with members of Surrealism.

Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* is a relatively 'late work', painted merely ten years before his death in 1957, which might offer further explanation as to why it differs so clearly from the rest of his oeuvre. Historically a number of features have been associated with lateness, with artists starting to self-reflect on endings, "not merely of their own creative struggles but also of the genres within which they worked" (Painter 2006: 2-4). Old age brings with it contemplation and insight, which can lead to some transformation. After a lifetime of revolutionary engaged painting, Rivera chose to paint an artwork with folk elements, which in fact, he had done before, as in 1923-24s *Dia de muertos*[8] or the four-panelled *Carnaval de la vida mexicana* (1936)[9].

Yet Painter (2006: 6) also emphasises that one must be careful in attributing too much to lateness. It is often more relevant to the reception of art than to its production and particular imaginative acts of participative reception will be the focus in the following introductory analysis of Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* which will serve the unpacking of key conceptual terms for my exploration of the imagination in the wake of Surrealism. Though the following aspects are intimately interwoven and simultaneously present — only distinguished in abstraction — the analysis will unfold in three phases, moving conceptually between the following key notions: the 'surrealist poetic image', intersubjective shared imagining and hypericonic dynamics.

Rivera's painting depicts four tubers or mandrake roots. On closer examination the roots become four monstrous, bizarrely shaped, quite grotesque figures. It is only really through the painting's title that it becomes possible for the spectator to decipher what scene Rivera is actually portraying. To the bottom right of the painting is St Anthony, his left arm trying to

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its own cultural and artistic revolution, in the form of Cubism (Rochfort 1993: 23-25). Rivera initially immersed himself in Cubism, but the movement ultimately proved insufficient for Rivera's need to express the social and political realities increasingly engaging his attention. Taking Rivera's stay in Europe into account, he actually becomes precursory to the development of Surrealism.

[7] Rivera was closely aligned with the politically engaged Marxist and nationalist revolutionaries in Mexico. Together with José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rivera was one of Mexico's *los tres Grande* – painting revolutionary murals for nearly five decades. Certain similarities between Surrealist thought and that of the Mexican muralist's are discernible. Most importantly for the present context, like the Surrealists, the Mexican muralists emphasised the "synthesis of art and imagination" (Rochfort 1993: 7). Moreover, the Mexican murals were painted "in direct opposition to the course of modernist art as practiced in Europe and America" (Rochfort 1993: 6), reminiscent of Surrealism's outsider status when compared to Greenbergian 'mainstream modernism'.

[8] Fresco, 415 x 375 cm. Mexico City: Ministry of Education.

[9] Four panels 389 x 211 cm each. Mexico City: Palacio de Bellas Artes.

ward off the other three beings approaching him. The nearest to St Anthony is a female-looking figure, identified by her abundant breasts. Next to her, the middle-figure is a kind of demon-beast, with horns and holding a trident. He appears to be riding something, possibly some manner of dragon-like creature. Lastly, to the back and left, is a tuber that seems to be a crocodile-type animal, recalling such mythical creatures as the Leviathan or Behemoth.

Rivera's use of tubers in general, and mandrake roots in particular, alludes to two Mexican folk-elements in the painting. The tubers likely reference the *Night of the Radishes*-festival held every December in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, where competitors fashion radishes into sculptures.[10] The mandrake roots also engage indigenous folk medicine customs. Mandrake roots have traditionally been associated with fertility as well as the belief that carrying the root on your person leads to wealth, success and happiness.[11] Mandrake root also contains a powerful alkaloid with the ability to cause hallucinations, delirium, and in large enough doses, coma. They have a hallucinogenic-anaesthetic quality, which, together with the shape of the root, led to the mandrake's association with magic, witchcraft and the supernatural (Carter 2003).[12]

The undefined setting appears to be outdoors; the background has an organic ambience, with the brushstrokes recalling the swirling and churning post-Impressionist style of Vincent van Gogh. Against this background, St Anthony appears to be the only tuber actually lying on the ground. The remaining three tubers, depicted as misshapen, and grotesque, seem to be almost levitating, rising off the ground, and gliding towards Anthony. It is this very hovering quality of suspension that supports their apparition-like appearance, and which suggests an air of animated motion and movement.

Of particular interest for the present context is that Rivera depicts the tubers as animated, dynamic, and organic. Tubers such as these have historically been used as rhopographic vegetables in kitchen or pantry still-lives. This motif harkens back to the baroque Spanish *bodegón,* such as those painted by Juan Sánchez Cotán (1560-1627). The *bodegón* connection betrays residual elements of Mexico's Hispanic colonial heritage. However, Rivera inverts the *bodegón* motif: plants have a form of vegetative life under normal circumstances, but in this painting the tubers give the impression of being subject to a magical enchantment, making them supernaturally or surreally alive. The theme that hence

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[10] Information regarding the Oaxaca *Night of the Radishes*-festival can be found online at http://www.oddity-central.com/pics/noche-de-rabanos-spanish-festival-celebrating-radishes.html or http://www.donquijote.org-/travel/guides/oaxaca/night-radishes.asp.

[11] Over time another myth also became associated with the root, which states that a demon inhabited it and would kill anyone who attempted to uproot it. Known as the mandrake's curse, according to legend, whenever the mandrake is uprooted it emits a bloodcurdling, lethal shriek that will drive the hearer insane or kill him or her (Carter 2003).

[12] The mandrake roots' association with the supernatural, witchcraft and demons as well as hallucination and delirium may explain why Rivera decided to appropriate St Antony and the temptation event in such a manner.

comes to the fore is that of an image that is alive. Moreover, traditionally in *bodegón* paintings the vegetables were displayed on an ordinary table, a pantry shelf, a plain stone slab, or suspended from a string, and certainly not a vibrantly animated background such as this.

The tubers themselves also differ from *bodegón* depictions since they are not the unmoved or unmoving objects found in traditional *nature morte* representations, but are rather vividly animated. The St Anthony-figure seems to be making a repellent, evasive motion with his left hand, possibly trying to evade the movement of the other figures closing in on him. That is also what the three remaining tubers appear to be doing – they are not motionless or lifeless – but seem to be encroaching upon St Anthony.

1.1.1 Surrealist 'poetic images'

By depicting 'human' and 'demonic' figures as tubers or roots, by combining elements in a highly incongruent manner, Rivera, in *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* fulfils Pierre Reverdy and the Surrealist's expectation of the 'poetic image', which as Grant (2005: 14) explains is an "overarching category" comprising painting as well as poetry proper.[13] The 'surrealist poetic image', in Reverdy's words: "cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two or more distant realities" (Breton 2010: 20). In the *First Manifesto*, Breton also gives his own description of the poetic image:

> It is, as it were, from the fortuitous juxtaposition of the two terms that a particular light has sprung, *the light of the image*, to which we are infinitely sensitive. The value of the image depends upon the beauty of the spark obtained; it is, consequently, a function of the difference of potential between the two conductors. […] [Such 'poetic images'] are the products of the activity I call Surrealist (Breton 2010: 37).

The 'light of the image' is a striking metaphor with many ramifications, one being its link with the modern project of Enlightenment, although in this case the metaphorical image

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[13] The use of the term 'poetic' is significant since it recalls the Greek *poiesis* which, during antiquity denoted "all producing" (Jauss & Shaw 1982: 591); in this sense, 'poetic' refers not only to poetry, but to the "imaginative logic of construction" and "*poietic* ability tells us what can be made" (Jauss & Shaw 1982: 596-97). By the 1920s, Duchampian ready-mades or Surrealist found objects insisted on the spectator's active participation – the meaning of *poiesis* had changed to the extent that it referred to the "process whereby the recipient becomes a participating creator of the work" (Jauss & Shaw 1982: 603-604). Which is why Grant (2005: 15) continues: "Poetic painting is an intersection, the result of the painter's imaginative activity that provokes the viewer's imagination. […] Because a painting as a visible object contributes to the lived sensory and emotional experience of its viewers, it can form the basis for further imaginative elaboration and response, the creation of further imagery". Images, like (natural) language, are not artificial, but 'poetic images' are made – they are artifices or devices constructed as result of contraction, and combination. Yet contrariwise the unconscious images of chance automatism are discovered not made, they reveal themselves, and afterwards they are combined and constructed.

wants to replace reason with imagination, logic with image, and science with art. It also promotes the revelatory and transformational power of the image, and lastly, despite this idolisation of images, it correctly identifies the eventful – or hypericonic – nature of images. I understand the 'beauty' of the spark to allude to the affective power or authority of images – the power of images to activate both artists and spectators imagination's.[14] Electricity, another striking and particularly modern metaphor of energy, force or power, alludes to the spark of a poetically juxtaposed image which must create a shock in the spectator.[15]

Surrealist juxtapositionings of disparate and distinct realities let the imagination take flight and cause it to be incompatible with reason (Matthews 1977: 2-4). The Surrealists considered the poetic image as meaningful only insofar as it conflicts with logic and rationality – the most successful Surrealist images being those which the reader's or spectator's past experiences have not equipped him or her to unravel, those very ones which unsettle the reader or shock the spectator (Fisher 1998: 5).

Breton (2010: 38) further enumerates certain "common virtues" which such perturbingly shocking 'poetic images' might share: they might be arbitrary and random, or contradictory, incongruous, and paradoxical, enigmatic, strange, dream-like, and difficult to describe, and lastly, they often also provoke laughter. Such disconcerting and puzzling affective surrealist image powers are intended to awaken and energise readers', spectators', and listeners' imaginations and to effect not only personal and individual but also, significantly, societal transformation.

Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* startles and disconcerts viewers. The image depicted is enigmatic – it is the painting's title which assists spectators to decipher the painted scene. Moreover, whether or not Rivera explicitly intended for *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* to be interpreted as such, this particular painting seems more humorous and playful than his politically engaged revolutionary murals. Rivera seems to be playing with the process of depicting and image-generation, and with us, his audience. He paints tubers, which are a vegetable, not as a still-life as one would expect, but animated, vibrant, moving,

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[14] The members of Surrealism might not have viewed the visual examples I discuss throughtout this study as the most shocking examples. Moreover, a contemporary spectator will likely not experience artworks, which might have been deemed shocking to a 1920s audience member, in a similar manner. It was precisely while searching for a means to give such historical shock-effects an enduring quality that I began to develop the notion of hypericonic dynamics as an art historical interrogative device.

[15] This idea of juxtaposing contradictory worlds had an earlier originator than Reverdy, in the form of the Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870). In one sentence, "the fortuitous encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table" (Grant 2005: 67), Lautréamont arrived at a remarkably succinct and demonstrative summary of the aims Surrealism would consider important, in a disparately mechanistic image conjoining domestic, outdoors, and anatomical spheres and anticipating some of the main characteristics of Surrealist expression (Matthews 1977: 21-23).

also rendering them alive and animated in the mind of the spectator. Furthermore, to portray a celebrated saint in the history of the Catholic Church as a plant is not meant to be taken seriously, but to be humorous or amusing, tongue-in-cheek even.

I suggest, moreover, that another, more pervasive, 'juxtapositioning of two or more distant realities' is disclosed by *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* in the strange fusion of folk-Mexican and colonial-Spanish cultures. Rivera appropriates elements from his colonial-Spanish ancestry, which he turns upside-down, critically undermining colonialist culture. He then intertwines these subverted colonial qualities with traditional indigenous Mexican folk-elements, to produce a painting which flusters as it plays with the process of depicting and image-generation, and with its audience.

When choosing visual examples, also particularly in the Mexican and South African settings, I select artworks that are 'surrealist poetic images' in this sense, revealing disparate and incongruent juxtaposed realities, which disconcert or unnerve. As a means to engage with artists outside of the Western-European setting, I have primarily chosen visual examples from Mexico and South Africa which display juxtaposed realities in both senses. Firstly, as marvellous, bizarre, or strange fusions and clashes of disparate imagery, and secondly as 'cultural interweavings' – western-colonial and indigenous-Mesoamerican or indigenous-African – as the case may be. These examples are selected so as to ignite a shocking spark for spectators, inciting the hypericonic dynamic.

1.1.2 Shared imagining

Surrealism began as a historically dated shared imagining community, consisting of the insider members of the French movement, united against a common enemy of their time, the bourgeoisie. These members of the inner circle of French Surrealism were the first to reveal the radical and subversive 'Surrealist imagination'. A broader, what I term 'surrealist dynamic' or time-current encompasses not only artists but also spectators and supporters among the art public, expanding geographically to include even artists and spectators in the Pacific South Seas and Latin-America. The surrealist dynamic operates by means of the geographical and temporal extension of the surrealist imagination, with artists creating works which reveal the 'surrealist poetic image'.

The broadest level of shared imagining, or more accurately the foundation that all the other levels are built upon, are typiconic fictive casts of the imagination, or imaginary *topoi,* which form a traditional matrix through recurrent holding patterns and worldview framings.[16]

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[16] 'Typiconic formats' refer to the basic way an artist frames his or her artistic production to be imaginatively received (Van den Berg 1993: 16). The framing of typiconic formats give artworks focus, like specially filtered eye glasses, to configure the playing field on which and in which things happen, are depicted, heard, habituated, followed, and then presented by the artist. Typiconic formats are not conceptual, nor semantic in

Typiconically, these imaginaries function historically, thereby giving imaginings at this foundational level the staying power of a historical heritage. The particular recurrent framings or holding patterns which resonated with Surrealism are the mystical and picaresque traditions.[17] These holding patterns are present in and motivate the French movement and the broader time-current, since both artists and spectators are needed to activate these imaginary worlds.

A common historical feature of the mystical and picaresque holding patterns is that they are conventionally more critical and subversive of convention. It is consequently understandable that these are the recurrent holding patterns which resonated with Surrealism, since they offer prefigurations for alternatives to convention and tradition.

Las tentaciones de San Antonio, for instance, is a mocking and playful depiction, more reminiscent of the picaresque mode than Rivera's more typical heroic posture. Rivera turns to the world-upside-down *topos* – spiritual battle presented in the shape of rude vegetables. He portrays a renowned saint of the Catholic Church as a fantastical and grotesque tuber – betraying, in this particular painting, a penchant for humour, for playfully grotesque comic forms, and for the traditional folk-wisdom of indigenous Mexican communities. In this picaresque mode in particular, Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* can be seen as an artwork in the wake of Surrealism.

Human imagining, although it functions individually in many and diverse situations, is also an intersubjectively shared capacity which helps us to navigate the social world by learning its conventions.[18] Within the particular domain of the fine arts, the idea of shared imagining has been elaborated upon, among others, by Gaston Bachelard who speaks of images

nature, but are imaginatively *a priori* which gives a specific typical cast, to an artist's work. A limited number of typical worldviews recur under changing diachronic conditions and amid the competing cultural dynamics of various historical periods, with 'worldviews' alluding to global constellations of committed, communally held positions about fundamental life-and-death issues such as ontic order, human nature, societal system and historical meaning (Van den Berg 1993: 1).

[17] The mystical worldview frame favours a spiritualist and dualist view based on ascetic world-flight and a desire for initiation into occult knowledge and revelation. Philosophically it is related to movements like gnosticism, astrology, kabbalism, hermeticism, spiritualism, theosophy, anthroposophy and Buddhism where a supernatural, spiritual world dominates a fallen, natural and material world. Supra-sensory mysteries, hidden sacred meanings, hypnotic trances and a transcendent presence are revealed directly to initiates, incarnated without any form of mediation. Representations are often mysterious with a tendency towards mandala patterns, ascending movement and a non-visual glow of metallic colours which often erase natural structures and boundaries (Van den Berg 1993: 1-3). Alternatively, the picaresque worldview framing highlights a comic geneticism philosophically related to an interactionary monism and naturalist Darwinism, based on bio-organic vitality and physio-organic drives. It reveals a predeliction for the topsy-turvy world *topos*, humour and biting satire. Picaresque representations prefer dance-like movements, cartoon-like drawing, and grotesque and comic forms. It respects the often tragic significance of vital, robust, unrefined, everyday labour, the natural seasonal life-cycles, traditional folk-wisdom and proverbs, and the rootedness and embodiment of all human culture so often depicted as episodic, repetitive, earthy, vulgar and scurrilous (De Villiers-Human 1999: 29-31).

[18] Philosophers who engage with notions regarding shared imagining include Paul Ricoeur (1986), Cornelius Castoriadis (1987), Richard Kearney (1999), and Charles Taylor (2004).

existing trans-subjectively among intentional subjects (Kearney 1998: 96); Lambert Zuidervaart concludes that object-mediated intersubjective processes occur within the imagination, and he prefers the phrase "imaginative cogency" (Zuidervaart 2004: 61); Arnold Berleant describes intersubjective processes through the notion of "participatory engagement" (Berleant 1991: 17); and, lastly Gaiger (2014: 344) uses Kendall Walton's notion of "participatory imagining" to explain spectator responses to artworks.

Consequently, the most basic intersubjective shared imagining occurs as cooperative imaging and imagining events between the artist and spectator, mediated by the imaginative configuration of the artwork, thus actualising imaginary worlds. Figure 2 shows the philosopher Dr Óscar de la Borbolla, actively and enthusiastically engaging and participating with the image depicted in Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* (Museo Nacional de Arte 2013). He is in the process of explaining the painting to an invisible audience in the Museo Nacional de Arte en México. Alternatively addressing the painting and the camera, gesturing toward the work, he speaks about it, connecting with Rivera's painting. I selected this video still to suggest the animating interaction or transaction between spectators and paintings. Thus, a painting, once a spectator stands in front of it, imaginatively playing along, presents its image which exists inter-subjectively (or trans-subjectively in Bachelard's term) between the artist, the work and the spectator; the painting is the objective carrier of imagery that mediate between artist and spectator. When imaginative intersubjective processes, such as playing or discovery, occur, the artist and spectator share in the work's imaginative cogency.

In order to narrow the focus I distinguish intersubjective, participatory imagining events between artist, artwork, and spectator, as well as the mystical and picaresque holding patterns, which give Surrealism a historical grounding and uncover and make accessible the persistence and legacy of Surrealism, as the two components of shared imagining on which I concentrate.

1.1.3 Hypericonic dynamics

Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* reveals the perplexing and bewildering affective power of surrealist images, meant to arouse the spectator. This 'spark' displays the affective power or authority of images to 'move' the spectator in various ways, for instance, to astonish, disturb, seduce, or convince him or her. To be shocking would be typical of the particular surrealist mode. This affective power of an image would in addition be marked by the recurrent imaginative cast of historical holding patterns — spiritually occult in the mystical and bodily satirical in the picaresque frame. The 'hypericonic dynamic' enacted during a spectator's participatory after-imaging in response to this affective power of images gains prominence in metapictorial works of art.

Let me explain how I arrived at this new understanding of the 'hypericonic' notion. In his introductory essay for Elkins' *Visual literacy* (2008), Mitchell admits that when he wrote *Iconology*, the book in which he introduced the concept of 'hypericons' almost three decades ago: "I had no idea that it would be the first volume in what turned out to be a trilogy (*Picture theory* and *What do pictures want*? in 1994 and 2005 would turn out to be the sequels)" (Mitchell 2008: 14). Mitchell himself had no idea what the term 'hypericon', which he mentioned for the first time in *Iconology*, would develop into. This is why I propose, in the vein of Bloom's notion of misprision, to 'misread' Mitchell. I aim to expand Mitchell's notion of hypericons and thereby develop the notion of 'hypericonic dynamics', as a critical as well as interrogative art historical device.

Rather than restricting Mitchellian hypericons to rare exceptional examples of certain imaginary *topoi*, as Mitchell himself (1986: 6) advocates, I propose to generalise Mitchell's notion of the hypericon, turning it into events of imaginative processing involved in picture-image dynamics. Therefore, I aim to develop and expand Mitchell's conception of the hypericon, or as I further develop the notion, the hypericonic dynamic or event.

In their first appearance Mitchellian hypericons, self-aware metapictures that stage or perform their self-knowledge for the spectator, refer to a select number of self-aware images (such as Plato's cave, Aristotle's wax tablet, Locke's darkroom, or Wittgenstein's hieroglyphic). In *Iconology* Mitchell (1986: 5) describes them as: "images (and ideas) [that] double themselves: the way we depict the act of picturing, imagine the activity of imagination, figure the practice of figuration". Such imagery displays the emergent processes or actions involved in creating an image – and it is in these 'acts, activities, and practices' of the imagination that I locate the operations of hypericonic dynamics.

The imaginative functions and activities which enable depicting, figuring, and imagining include but are not limited to specific nuances and mixtures of, among others, playful make-believe, curiosity and wonder, dreaming and fictionalising fantasy, and practices of tactful intuition and conjecture, discovery and improvising, surprise and empathising, creativity and wit. Though they obsessively ascribed its origin to the unconscious, shocking surrealist 'poetic images' are generated by these imaginary actions. Such images trigger surprised spectators' imaginative responses. I propose that the notion of hypericonic dynamics may be helpful in coming to grips with the image as an eventful interaction between the spectator and the work.

Within the domain of the fine arts, hypericonicity is an imaginary potential innate in all representations (Mitchell 1994: 82). It is in this field that images reveal that 'they know

themselves', and where 'they reflect on themselves' as 'theoretical objects'.[19] At this juncture it is necessary that I distinguish between key terms – metapicture, meta-image, and hypericon – terms which are often confused or misunderstood. To explain his conception of self-aware or self-reflexive drawings or paintings, in other words 'pictures', Mitchell uses the term 'metapicture', since 'image', in his critical iconology, is such an ambiguous term. Adding to the confusion is the fact that Victor Stoichita does not distinguish between 'image' and 'picture', and he therefore refers to self-aware or self-referential paintings as 'meta-images' (Stoichita 1997: 104). Since I agree with Mitchell, that the term 'image' can be misleading and its meaning unclear, I will also use the term 'metapicture' when referring to self-aware painting.

Metapictures, according to Mitchell (2008: 18-19), are pictures that are self-aware or self-referential and that stage their own self-knowledge for their spectator. They can be any picture including or repeating itself, any picture in which a depiction of another picture appears, or where an image appears inside another image, or a picture presents a scene of depiction. The medium itself need not be doubled: a statue can appear inside a painting, or I would add, as in the case of pictures of the St Anthony legend, phantasms, visions and apparitions can be displayed (as images) in paintings. Whenever pictures are used as devices to reflect upon or reconsider the nature of pictures, when they are used within the discourse surrounding images, they reveal metapictoriality.

It is necessary to grasp metapictures, since they ground Mitchell's notion of hypericons. He writes:

> Plato's Allegory of the Cave is a highly elaborated philosophical metapicture, providing a model of the nature of knowledge as a complex assemblage of shadows, artifacts, illumination, and perceiving bodies. [I refer] to these kinds of verbal, discursive metaphors as 'hypericons', or 'theoretical pictures' that often emerge in philosophical texts as illustrative analogies (cf. the comparison of the mind to a wax tablet or a camera obscura) that give images a central role in models of the mind, perception, and memory. The 'metapicture', then, might be thought of as a visually, imaginatively, or materially realized form of the hypericon (Mitchell 2008: 19).

This quoted paragraph shows that Mitchell's own conception of hypericons also changed. More than two decades after he first introduced the concept of hypericons, Mitchell

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[19] In *The rhetoric of perspective: realism and illusionism in seventeenth-century Dutch still life painting* (2005), Hanneke Grootenboer also uses examples of theoretical images, or "paintings [that] not only shows but also thinks" (Grootenboer 2005: 9-10). Grootenboer speaks of 'thinking' or 'pensive' images, when she writes: "painting is a form of thinking" (Grootenboer 2007). Mieke Bal in contrast, in *Travelling concepts in the humanities* (2002), prefers using 'theoretical objects' for paintings that inquire about their own nature (Bal 2002: 63).

reformulated this notion, linking it to his later concept 'metapictures', first described in *Picture Theory* (1994).

In developing hypericonic dynamics, I aim to continue the trajectory of this singular concept, not only as a potentiality found in metapictures, but as a potential of all images. Central to my expanded notion is the eventful nature of the interaction shared between artists and spectators, mediated by artworks. In order to demonstrate the value of my assumptions, I plan to choose visual examples which I propose disclose a particular hypericonic dynamic, or that reveal latent hypericonic reverberations.

I extend the usage of Mitchellian hypericons, firstly by recognising them as 'potential images' in Gamboni's sense (Gamboni 2002: 9). Artworks allow for different interpretations, but they are dependent upon the spectator's imaginative participation to actualise diverse interpretations. Images and pictures have the potential for multiple interpretations – they are allusive, nuanced, and playful. Such images invite spectators to imaginatively interact with them, to have the power of images affect them, to activate a cascade of imaginative after-images in the 'mind's eye' of engaged and participating spectators. Imaginative spectator engagement is central to the operation of hypericonic dynamics, since it is through the functions and processes of the willing spectator's imagination that the dynamic is ignited.

In other words, a spectator with a fertile receptive imagination might interpret *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* in various ways – as a 'late work' in Rivera's oeuvre and one perhaps in conversation with his more political-revolutionary motivated murals, or as a humorous, tongue-in-cheek portrayal of a saint of the Catholic Church, or as a perplexingly outrageous depiction of a 'surrealist poetic image', juxtaposing disparate worlds and provoking the shocking affective power of surrealist images.

I broaden Mitchell's hypericonic notion in interaction and collaboration with Baxandall's notion of the relationship between the artwork and spectator as "ostensive" – that when an artwork displays itself, it is accompanied with an implicit directive to 'look!' (Baxandall 1979: 456), or as in Thierry de Duve's exhibition and catalogue *Voici* (the original title of the exhibition), which literally means "see this, here", or to use De Duve's translation 'Look' (De Duve 2001: 5). In Figure 2, Dr De la Borbolla is shown keenly responding to and eagerly engaging and participating with Rivera's painting, responding to the painting's demand and to its hypericonic image power.

Furthermore, I incorporate Ricoeur's use of François Dagognet's expression '*augmentation iconique*', which characterises the "power of images" (Ricoeur 1991: 130), as well as Resina's notion of after-imaging, which occur at the boundaries of voluntary and

involuntary, conscious and unconscious processes of seeing.[20] The after-image concept is vital since it presents a greater grasp of the eventful character of viewing actions (Resina 2003:1).[21]

Augmentation iconique activates the notion of cascading imaginative after-imaging, combined with a finely honed imaginative sensibility in spectator response, which relates it to the classical affective quality of *enargeia* – imaginary vividness in the 'mind's eye', in the sense of imaginatively making alive or making present in the mind of the spectator (cf. Webb 2009: 10, 22; Plett 2012: 4; Sheppard 2014: 19, 41).[22]

Artworks actively act on their viewers, since they have agency, achieved through *enargeia*. With every interaction with artworks with hypericonic potential, *enargeia* is shared bodily between spectators, and between artist and spectator, as a basic intersubjective event of cooperative imagining. In this manner, the hypericonic event does not take place on the canvas, or even only in the 'mind's eye' of the spectator, but through imaginatively vivid imaging and after-imaging events between the artist and spectator, mediated by the imaginary worlds staged and performed by artworks.

The practices, actions and processes involved in generating images trigger the hypericonic event. A hypericonic dynamic is set in motion through imaginative spectator engagement and participation in performing strategies which may have the experience of *enargeia* as outcome.

What other imaginative actions involved in imaging, portraying, rendering, or activities involved in depicting, figuring, imagining does *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* disclose? Does the painting seem empathetic towards St Anthony's plight? Of this I am not convinced. Portraying the celebrated saint as a vegetable does not seem particularly empathising, or especially tactful. *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* furthermore, does not appear to be an improvisational depiction, nor intuitively created as one would find in depictions produced using the technique of automatic drawing, for example. Rather, Rivera figures intuitive improvisation when he plays with the forms of the mandrake roots, figuring these into the shapes of saint and demons. The scene depicted in *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* besides its playful nature, could perhaps suggest hallucinatory qualities, resembling a spectral scene from a fever dream, a fantastical reverie.

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[20] François Dagognet introduced his notion of *augmentation iconique* in his 1973 publication, *Ecriture et iconographie*. (Paris Librarie Philosophique J Vrin)*.*

[21] The eventful nature of hypericonic dynamics may also be explained by reference to Horst Bredekamp's theory of the *Bildakt*, i.e. the enargeic and conceptual operations of imaging and imagining (cf Bredekamp 2010).

[22] *Enargeia* also relates to the anthropologist Alfred Gell's account of agency, that "aspect of the interaction between works of art and their viewers that makes them similar to living beings: their agency, the power to influence their viewers" (Van Eck 2010: 644, 651).

It is important to realise that events of hypericonic dynamics are extremely nuanced and utterly individualised for each work, each spectator and each of the reiterated and actualising performative responses to the work. Nevertheless, hypericonic dynamics are not confined to these instances. In fact, its continuous presence enables the cumulative nuances of shared imagining.

1.2   Methodological considerations

The introductory examination of Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* at the start of this chapter served as an *in media res* introduction of what may be termed 'hypericonic analysis' as a 'novel art historical method' that I propose to elaborate on the basis of systemic debates in recent image theory, or *Bildwissenschaft* as in continental discourse. I consider the investigation of the imagination in the wake of Surrealism as a testing ground for the viability of this approach.

It is necessary for me to introduce a critical notion, to which I have already obliquely referred: the image-picture distinction (Curtis 2011: 2; Mitchell 2008: 14). Since my approach is digital-archival, I briefly address key aspects related to digital archiving, and lastly, I give a short overview as to the structure of this study.

1.2.1   Image-picture distinction

As in the case of shared imagining and hypericonic dynamics, I investigate the image-picture distinction under the banner of image studies – one recent approach to the field of the imagination, and theories regarding imaging and imagining.[23]

Due to the wide-ranging and extensive scope encompassing image studies, it is not surprising that some confusion reigns regarding what an 'image' might be.[24] The term, according to Mitchell 1986: (9-10), may refer to numerous things, events, or happenings: 'image' can refer to "pictures, statues, optical illusions, maps, diagrams, dreams, hallucinations, spectacles, projections, poems, patterns, memories, and even ideas". Thus, 'image' can refer to physical objects, such as paintings or sculptures, or to mental or

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[23] In Elkins' (1999: 6) view art history is centrally positioned to investigate the emerging field of image studies since it "possesses the most exact and developed language for the interpretation of pictures". Existing art historical methods, which normally focus on art objects, can be extended and nuanced to embrace all images.
[24] Elkins (1999(a), Grau (2007), Boehm (2007), Moxey (2008), Wiesing (2010), Elkins & Naef (2011), Boehm & Mitchell (2011), Rampley (2012), and Gaiger (2014(a)) all elaborate upon the layered, multifaceted nuances of image theories investigated in *Bildwissenschaft* or image studies

imaginary phenomena – the visual content of dreams and memories, as well as verbal motifs, as in metaphors.[25]

Mitchell, as part of his critical iconology of image science, therefore promotes the 'image-picture distinction' (Mitchell 2005: xiii-xiv; Mitchell 2008: 16). A particular reason why it becomes necessary to distinguish between 'image' and 'picture' is because both terms are signified by the word '*Bild*' in German, a word deeply rooted in both German culture and language. In German *Bildwissenschaft,* in particular, '*Bild*' may refer to an image, picture, figure or illustration, to portrait as in '*Bildnis*' or, more generally in terms of German culture, to education or character formation, as the '*Bildung*' of a *gebildete* person (Gaiger 2014(a): 209). The distinction between 'image' and 'picture' in German is therefore one of context, where '*Bild*-as-image' can refer to a myriad of different things, while '*Bild*'-as-picture' indicates depictions in a particular medium, and therefore usually drawings, engravings, paintings, prints or photographs. Though ambiguous, the German term '*Bild*' is charged with the power of imaging and imagining.

Clearly 'image' refers to much more than merely pictures, or paintings; pictures present images, or images appear in pictures. Mitchell describes the difference between images and pictures in the following terms:

> You can hang a picture, but you cannot hang an image. The image seems to float without any visible means of support, a phantasmatic, virtual, or spectral appearance. It is what can be lifted off the picture, transferred to another medium, translated into a verbal ekphrasis, or protected by copyright law. The image is the 'intellectual property' that escapes the materiality of the picture when it is copied. The picture is the image plus the support; it is the appearance of the immaterial image in a material medium. That is why we can speak of architectural, sculptural, cinematic, textual, and even mental images while understanding that the image in or on the thing is not all there is to it (Mitchell 2005: 85).

Where Mitchell makes his case in systematic terms, Belting, in contrast, reasons in historical terms when he maintains that images "migrate across the boundaries that separate generations and cultures", whereas pictures belong "to a particular point in time" and are dependent on mediation and remediation (Belting 2011: 17-19).

[25] Mitchell recommends dividing images according to branches of an 'image family' – categories differentiated according to key Wittgensteinian family likenesses or resemblances. Mitchell distinguishes between graphic, optical, perceptual, mental, and verbal images, constructing the branches of this 'family of images' between the extremes of graphic and verbal images – reflecting his own interests in word and image conflicts, as for example in his dissertation on Blake's illustrated poetry. This tension introduces an inherent instability into his image systematics, in the form of a bickering (Wittgensteinian) family. Furthermore, this word-image conflict, or power struggle, mirrors the quarrel among members of the French Surrealist movement for the supremacy of either painting or poetry, which makes his basic concepts suitable for my own project.

The image-picture distinction is essential for the role it plays in hypericonic dynamics, the affective power of images. The temptation of St Anthony *topos* is particularly suited to illustrate the distinction, while also showing the eventful character of the hypericonic dynamic. St Anthony saw 'images', in the form of visions, apparitions, glamours, and hallucinations. Artists painted imaginatively vivid interpretations of these 'images' in their pictures. When a spectator engages with these images carried or presented in pictures, an imaginative cascade of after-images is activated, reverberating and resonating with imaginary vividness. This cascade of images, however, is not only in the mind's eye of the spectator, but operates as an imaginatively vivid event between artist, artwork and spectator. In the particular case of depictions of the temptation of St Anthony, images have the power to be either tormenting or seductive, exerting their powers not only on St Anthony, but on imaginatively engaged spectators as well.

1.2.2 Archival approach

I have not, in person, been in the presence of most of the material works of art to which I refer in this study. In the current state of information and communications technology — the medium of dematerialised digital pictures — I have access to these images through digital archiving.

It is necessary to be aware of a dialectic tension inherent in digital archiving. On the one hand, one finds the historical visual material, the 'real works of art' as 'auratic objects' or concrete events, in particular in past and present interactions with these objects in, for instance, exhibitions and museum collections. On the other hand, such 'real works of art' are situated in an uneasy relationship with the digitally archived visual material – whether digital items, records, 'post-auratic' photographs, scans, or tracings. Moreover, the latter digital material is not restricted to localised archives since it merges with the unlimited and chaotic flood of digital images beyond any single archive, with the consequence that one is confronted with the new obscurity of an oceanic surplus.

This 'dematerialisation' of medium has both negative and positive consequences: a deficit of descriptive thickness and increasing ease of image manipulation contrasted with an expanding comparative reach. The visual material stored in a digital archive involves extreme situations of reductive remediation, subject to post-production processes of copying, downloading and montage of digital images. The archive captures the migratory trajectories of visual material in data-images and interface projections. Such remediation reduces the art historian's primary material, in my case, eventful artworks, to digital photographic pictures or so-called 'arrested images' projected on screens, augmenting the already powerful impulse towards distortive "picture theories" of perception and imaging. Negotiating this condition requires an advanced archival hermeneutic harnessing the

combined and co-ordinated actions of a schooled and experienced historical and aesthetic imagination.

A cardinal feature of an art historical archive, and one I freely exploited, is the essential visual heuristic factor which facilitates accessibility, selectivity, and serendipity on the basis of the neighbouring clusters of historically related visual items as primary horizon and launching platform for searching and finding items.

Hypericonic dynamics, as a means of spectator engagement and participation, are beneficial in the movement from 'post-auratic' image to vivid image, and from digital image to the intermedial diversity of the shared imagination. Through hypericonic events, spectators can still experience the power of images even if such images are in a digitalised format. Moreover, in the digital archive, the dynamic is free to resonate and reverberate with networks and webs of imagery.

1.2.3   Chapter overview

The hypericonic analysis of Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* in this introductory chapter presents the iconographical theme of the temptation of St Anthony, and the power of poetic images. This will be followed, in chapter 2, by an investigation into the iconography of the temptation of St Anthony, which, in various ways, may serve as a further guide in understanding hypericonic dynamics, or affective image powers. Since the temptation of St Anthony was also a recurring theme among the members of Surrealism, I take advantage of depictions of the temptation event's tormenting and seducing image powers to further illuminate the eventful nature of hypericonic dynamics. Artists enact such imaginative activities as dreaming, reverie, fantasising, fictionalising, playing, make-belief and improvising to create paintings which torment or seduce Anthony, and which are therefore, in key examples, imaginatively vivid for spectators.

Chapter 3 will be devoted to a brief theoretical exploration of the imagination. I scrutinise features of the Surrealist views of the imagination (both voluntary and involuntary) that open avenues for an enriched conception of the diversity of imaginary actions as well as a higher appreciation of the operations of the imagination beyond surrealism and beyond art. In continuing to develop hypericonic dynamics as an interrogative tool for image hermeneutics, I utilise nuanced combinations of imaginative operations, including improvisational games of chance and dream projections, in hypericonic analyses of key visual examples.

In chapter 4 I investigate three artists selected from a cluster of women surrealists living and working in Latin-America. I focus my investigation on Frida Kahlo, Remedios Varo, and Leonora Carrington. Key paintings from their respective oeuvres all display 'surrealist poetic

images', juxtaposing incongruent realities in images which startle, enthral, and mesmerise imaginatively participative spectators with their uniquely feminine image powers.

In chapter 5, I aim to extend the insights I have gained throughout this study, and particularly through my exploration of the women surrealists in Latin-America, to the contemporary South African setting. I focus on three South African artists – Alexis Preller, Cyril Coetzee, and Breyten Breytenbach – artists whom I situate in the wake of Surrealism, and whose respective oeuvres also disclose typically surrealistic hypericonic affective image powers over imaginatively engaged spectators.

The final chapter of this study will be devoted to an appraisal of what it has accomplished as well as an evaluation of the study's shortcomings and further questions which have been opened for future research.

Figure 1. Diego Rivera, *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* (1947)

Figure 2. Diego Rivera, *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* (1947), with spectator

Chapter 2: The dangerous power of images – tormenting and seductive imagery in *The temptation of St Anthony*

Diego Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* (Figure 1), an example in the wake of Surrealism, performs the hypericonic affective power of images – showing that images have agency, they can be disconcerting and perplexing. The temptation of St Anthony *topos* is particularly suited to illustrate hypericonic dynamics since, in depictions of the narrative such as Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* wondrous and supernatural apparitions, ghosts or demons are portrayed as living, talking, interacting moving images. Not only are these apparitions alive and animated, they are also dangerous temptations that can exert an uncontrollable power, in some cases tormenting, in others seductive, over the imaginatively engaged spectator.

Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* also shows manifestations of 'mental images', in the form of visions, apparitions, hallucinations, spectres, or phantasms, making this depiction of the temptation event a metapicture, with pictures within pictures (Mitchell 1994: 35). Key metapictorial depictions of the legend, like Rivera's interpretation, are aware that they portray phantasms, visions and apparitions, so-called 'mental images'. Rivera's depiction is also aware of the actions and activities of picturing, figuring and imagining that he enacted as he produced this artwork, including playing, dreaming, fantasising, improvising, and intuiting. These actions of the imagination involve intense imaginative spectator engagement and participation, and disclose the hypericonic affective power and agency of pictures to torment or seduce not only Anthony but spectators as well.

Key historical depictions of the temptation of St Anthony show that the torment and seductiveness of his visions had an effect on the saint – conveying his doubt if these visions are real or illusory, whether the demonic apparitions are tangible or fictional. Depictions of St Anthony also highlight their affective appeal and presence for spectators. It is in this affective dimension of spectator engagement that the power of images becomes emphasised via the function that ancient and humanist rhetorics identified as an affective style quality, namely, *enargeia* (Greek) or *evidentia* (Latin). These terms may be translated as 'calling before the mind's eye', or as 'imaginary vividness' in the sense of making alive or making present, which is what the key examples which I identified accomplish – the apparitions tempting, tormenting, and seducing Anthony become as alive, animated, present for the spectator as they were for Anthony in the Egyptian desert (cf. Webb 2009; Plett 2012; Sheppard 2014).

As indicated by the growing popularity of depictions of this story since the sixteenth century, the legend has gradually achieved a commonplace status in various traditions within western art history, transcending its origins in patristic hagiography and its

established ecclesiastical role in Christian iconography. Its expanded field as a thematic *topos* concerns its exploitation by early modern and modernist artists in the manner of a pictorial *ars poetica*, in other words as self-aware reflexive imagery. It recalls but also differs from related pictorial metaphors – such as Alberti's *finestra aperta*, the open window, the mirror, the veil – due to its particular focus on the affective nature of pictures (Belting 1994: 1, 6).

2.1   The legend of St Anthony: a *topos* of the imagination

In the course of Western history temptation narratives, and their recounting in visual depictions, have acquired the status of a *topos* — a commonplace, theme, motif, or convention — which in different versions occur again and again.[26] In this regard a particularly popular theme in Western iconography concerns the temptations of St Anthony.

The legend of the *Temptation of St Anthony* is a significant historical *topos* influencing numerous depictions over seven centuries. From this profuse diversity of visual depictions, I have selected key examples, chosen for their metapictoriality and the varied ways in which they perform their hypericonic dynamics. Summarised in table 1, Appendix A, are more key depictions of the legend from the late Middle Ages until the early twentieth century.[27] Despite the copious amount of interpretations of the *topos* which I include, whether employed in an in-depth analysis or just mentioned succinctly, there are still depictions of the temptation event to which I have not referred. This profusion is evidence of the narrative's status as *topos* and of its continued popularity in Western iconography.

Two main versions of the legend of St Anthony serve as literary sources for its depiction: the *Vita Antonii* or *The life of St Anthony* by Athanasius of Alexandria written between 356 and 362 AD, and Gustave Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine,* the final version of which was published in 1874.[28] These narrations reflect on "the dynamics of temptation" (Harpham 1987: 73), whether, for example, the form the temptations take are mainly tormenting, as in Athanasius, or mainly seductive, as in Flaubert. Visual depictions of the legend are

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[26] Accounts of temptations are found in many diverse narratives (Faxon 1998: 865-867). In classical literature temptations are described in Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Temptations have a long biblical history as well, beginning with Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden, with other biblical temptations including Juda and Tamar, Joseph and Potifar's wife, David and Bathsheba, and the temptations of Christ and St John the Baptist. Later well-known instances of literary accounts of temptation include St Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions* (397), William Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603), and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The scarlet letter* (1850).

[27] In brief footnotes I list a number of other examples, per each flourishing.

[28] Sources for Athanasius of Alexandria's *The life of St Anthony* are:

Ellis, F.S. (ed). 1900. *The golden legend or lives of the saints as Englished by William Caxton*. Vol. 2. London: JM Dent, also available online at The Medieval Sourcebook, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/-goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume2.asp#Anthony and Gregg, R.C. 1980. *Athanasius: the life of St Anthony and the letter to Marcellinus*. London: SPCK.

Gustave Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* is available online via the Gutenberg Project, at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25053/25053-h/25053-h.htm.

consequently centred on two distinct components of the encounters between Anthony and his tempters or temptations: the depictions either present *Schrecken* – that is, fright when they are tormenting or forbidding – or *Lust* when desire, pleasure, seduction are at stake.[29]

Furthermore, typiconic recurrent holding patterns and worldview framings, which represent certain fictive casts of the imagination or imaginary *topoi,* in which tormenting and seduction transpires, may also be distinguished. Most examples based on Athanasius' version either portray Anthony's visionary experiences as mystical or employ the picaresque world-upside-down *topos* using comically grotesque forms. Some of these earlier depictions also portray Anthony heroically as the unmoved victor withstanding temptation. Some depictions painted in response to Flaubert's narrative still reveal affinities with the mystical or picaresque holding patterns of early modern paintings. However, due to the secularisation and sexualisation of the narrative, certain depictions show themselves to lean, rather, to the erotic holding pattern, while others focus on the an idyllic, idealised world, filled with seductive splendour and beauty.

I have selected a number of key works of art in the history of representations of St Anthony's temptation. In these paintings, supernatural apparitions and spectres are portrayed as living, talking, interacting and moving images. These apparitions are not only real and alive to St Anthony in depictions of these encounters. In the case of key works spectators are engaged with such imaginative power that their agency of *enargeia* or imaginary vividness render the apparitions alive and their temptations active in the consciousness of spectators as well.[30] These imaginary apparitions are not only alive, they are also dangerous temptations that, I propose, exert an almost uncontrollable affective power over the spectator.

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[29] *Schrecken und Lust: Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius von Hieronymus Bosch bis Max Ernst* (Terror and desire: the Temptation of St Anthony from Hieronymus Bosch to Max Ernst) was an exhibition held at the Bucerius Kunst Forum, Hamburg, Germany between 9 February to 18 May 2008. This exhibition was the first of its kind, bringing together some 70 paintings, drawings, etchings and illustrations from the beginning of the fourteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, all representing the fantastical, demon-invested nightmare world of St Antony's temptation. The exhibition catalogue was published in 2008, by Hirmer Verlag, Munich.

[30] In the mystical and picaresque holding patterns both artist and spectator have particular roles to play. The mystical tradition conceives of the artist's role variously as, among others, visionary, seer, shaman, sage, esoteric, cabbalist, or clairvoyant, resonating with the members of Surrealism who considered themselves to be not merely prophets or seers, but magicians who had the capacity to change both man and the world (Nadeau 1965: 49-50). In this imaginary the spectator also has apposite roles to play for instance that of initiate, novice, neophyte, disciple, convert, acolyte or devotee, which also explains Breton's (2010: 35) conviction that "Surrealism does not allow those who devote themselves to it to forsake it whenever they like". The Surrealist's, furthermore, regarded themselves as "inventors, madmen, revolutionaries, misfits, dreamers" (Nadeau 1965: 92). These evoke the picaresque holding pattern's favoured artist roles, which historically include the *picaro*, trickster, fool, jester, conjuror, and satirist. Conversely it is up to the spectator to imaginatively play the role of accomplice, collaborator, insider, fool, or victim.

Key paintings of the legend of the temptation of St Anthony, besides making St Anthony's visions appear alive to the 'mind's eye' or spiritual vision of the spectator, also self-referentially reveal kinds and degrees of metapictoriality. These paintings, since they display visions, apparitions, and phantasms, stage pictorial self-knowledge. Furthermore, because they convey St Anthony's struggle with the authentic or illusory status of the demonic and aberrant apparitions, with the affective power of images to be tormenting or seductive, they reflect on the nature of picturing, specifically in this case, the ability to exert imaginary power over spectators. The power of images, and of the imagination, to 'move' spectators were, of course, of key importance to the Surrealists. It was their express aim to provoke their bourgeois audience, to stimulate them to radical and revolutionary action, and the reason why they intended for their art to be shocking.

An in-depth discussion of the legend of St Anthony falls outside the focus of my investigation; nevertheless, the narratives do inform the ways in which the legend is depicted and therefore I highlight some central factors. Athanasius' tale was recorded in the second volume of Jabobus de Voragine's (ca 1230–1298) *Legenda aurea*, or *The Golden Legend, The Lives of the Saints* in 1275, which was first translated into English by William Caxton and published in 1483. Flaubert's version is a prose-poem, which he spent nearly thirty years writing. He completed three versions (in 1848, 1856, and 1872) before the final version was published in 1874.[31]

2.2   The Christian saint in patristic literature

Athanasius' legend holds a prominent position in the history of Western ethics and spirituality. It is the first biography of a monk – Anthony is often considered the first monk and the father of monasticism (Harmless 2004: 18, 69). The narrative broke new ground and would inspire incalculable imitators over the next thousand years. Key elements, including the dramatic initial conversion, the ascetical feats, the battles with demons, the miracles would become customary sources of medieval hagiography. In fact, Athanasius' *The life of St Anthony* is a primary hagiographic work, as one of the earliest and also most important examples ever written (Harpham 1987: 3-4).[32]

The setting for both narratives is the Egyptian desert, a terrain most Romans of Athanasius' time saw as being at the edge of the world. It was completely foreign and remote, with only the Nile River as a small and narrow lifeline in an otherwise arid country (Harmless 2004: 3-

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[31] Flaubert's narrative was first translated into English in 1875, by Lafcadio Hearn.

[32] The genre of hagiography, many agree, was inaugurated and epitomised by *The life of Antony* (Harpham 1987: 72). Hagiographies, nevertheless, remain highly imaginative works with particular functions within the early Christian and medieval worlds. *The life of St Antony,* for example, is a patristic, apologetic literary work that played a crucial role in the expansion and growth of monasticism.

4, 17). It is an accepted trope that the desert is the chosen and fixed domain of demons.[33] It is a place of chaos and of demons and devils, indeed the place where grotesquely hybrid beasts live. The desert is also where ascetics go to live and where they must overcome all manner of temptations (Harmless 2004: 61-62).

Anthony lived as such an ascetic, endeavouring to deny himself all earthly indulgences: he did manual labour, spent his nights in prayer, and maintained a strict diet of bread, salt, and water, and fasted often.[34] Athanasius' Anthony is also considered a 'holy man' or 'divine sage' (cf. Cox 1983: xiii-xiv; Harmless 2004: 66-67). Even though he was illiterate, he earned a reputation for his wisdom, with philosophers, judges and even emperors consulting him. He was also a teacher, wishing to share his wisdom with his followers. He was wise, judicious, and just, an advisor, mentor and elder, a mystic, tutor and guide.

Living in the desert as an ascetic hermit and holy man led to the temptations that tormented him throughout his life, which Ellis (1900: 225) describes as "they came in form of divers beasts wild and savage, of whom that howled, another siffled [sic], and another cried, and another brayed and assailed S Anthony [sic], that one with horns, the others with their teeth, and the others with their paws and ongles [sic], and disturbed [sic], and all to rent his body". These beasts and hybrid beings are exactly the forms that were very popular in the depiction of the legend, before Flaubert's version was published. They are fearsome and terrifying creatures, portrayed as hybrid fusions of lizard, bird, and fish, or other highly imaginative creatures. These creatures would likely also have grabbed the attention of the Surrealists. Before the publication of Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* these were the forms the apparitions and visions took as they tormented St Anthony. In such depictions the apparitions and visions' tormenting power held sway not only over St Anthony but over their spectators as well.

2.3   St Anthony in early modern depictions

One of the earliest surviving depictions attributed to an artist is Martin Schöngauer's (1435-91) engraving *Heiliger Antonius, von Dämonen gepeinigt* (1470's) (Figure 3).[35] The iconology of Schöngauer's interpretation was highly influential, even inspiring Michelangelo (1475-

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[33] The desert as a setting plays a singular role in the Bible. The Egyptian desert is where the Israelites spent 40 years, St John the Baptist lived as an ascetic in the Jordanian desert, and Christ spent 40 days and nights in the Judean desert, where he also experienced three temptation events. Athanasius modelled his narrative on Christ's temptation by the devil; as Christ was tormented and tempted in the desert, so too, was Antony.

[34] Antony was an ascetic and an anchorite. The term Athanasius uses, *anachōresis*, is more closely translated as 'withdrawal', which explains why Antony lived in a desert fort for twenty years (Harmless 2004: 64).

[35] Other early examples of the temptation include Pol and Jehan de Limburg (ca 1370-1416), *St Anthony fighting demons* (1405-09); Stefano di Giovanni (ca 1392-1451), *St Anthony attacked by demons* (1430-32); Master of Observanza tryptich, *The temptation of St Anthony* (1425-50); and Lieven van Lathem (1430-93), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (1469).

1564) to paint the legend as a boy (Lucie-Smith 1975: 17). Though derived from the basic pictorial type of icon-and-legend associated with cultic imagery Schöngauer's rendition appears to be his own visual interpretation of the hagiographic narrative. As befits a persuasive interpretation by an early modern artist; the image he created convinces one that he actually read Athanasius' legend prior to creating the engraving.

His interpretation is also highly imaginative – which explains its significance. Anthony's gaze towards the viewer appears practically tranquil, unmoved and resting in a remote domain of sanctity, as one would expect from an accomplished anchorite, while frantic and wild beasts and demons grab at his clothes, limbs, and hair, attacking him with clubs. Schöngauer's devils are grotesque fusion beings, creatures that are fantastically monstrous mixing body parts from all manner of different animals, including birds, insects, fish, a lizard and a dog, all with wings, horns, fur, scales, beaks, and claws.

Schöngauer's portrayal of the temptation event more than likely inspired Hieronymus Bosch's (ca 145-1516), *De verzoeking van St Antonius* triptych (1500) (included in table 1) (Lucie-Smith 1975: 17).[36] That Schöngauer probably read Athanasius' narrative already points towards *Heiliger Antonius'* metapictorial value, highlighted by the fact that artists as dissimilar as Michelangelo and Bosch appropriated and adapted elements from Schöngauer's interpretation. Michelangelo's version, in fact, is practically a direct citation of Schöngauer's *Heiliger Antonius.* In turn, many Early Netherlandish depictions of the temptation adapted elements from Bosch's version, which consequently has the effect that Schöngauer's *Heiliger Antonius* appears like a ghostly presence associated with all of those depictions.

Matthias Grünewald (ca 1475-1528) painted the central panel and wings of the *Isenheim altarpiece* (1512-16) (Figure 4) for the Monastery of St Anthony in Isenheim, near Colmar (in

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[36] More German and early Netherlandish examples include: Lucas Cranach (ca 1472-1553), *Die Versuchung der heiligen Antonius* (1506); Jan Baegert van Wessel (ca 1465-1535), *Scenes form the life of St Anthony* (1510); Joachim Patenier (1480-1524), *Temptation of St Anthony* (1515); Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (1509); Jan Wellens de Cock (ca 1480-1528) *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (ca 1520); Jan Mandijn (ca 1500-1560), *De verzoeking van sint Antonius*, na Pieter Bruegel (ca 1550), as well as three more versions of *De verzoeking van sint Antonius* (ca 1530, 1550, and unknown date); Pieter Huys (1519-84), *De verzoeking van St Antonius* (1547); Cornelis Massijs (ca 1510-1557), *De bekoring van de heilige Antonius* (date unknown); a Flemish tapestry, *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius*, in the style of Bosch (Brussels 1550-70); Marten de Vos (1532-1603), *De verzoeking van sint Antonius* (ca 1591-94); Abraham Blooteling (1640-90), *De versoeking van de heilige Antonius* (date unknown); Jan Bruegel de Jongere (1601-78), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (date unknown); Domenicus van Wijnen (1661-ca 1695), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (date unknown); David Ryckaert III (1612-1661), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (date unknown); Roelandt Savery (1576-1639), *Landschap met de verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (1617); Cornelis Saftleven (1607-81), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius*, (two versions both dated 1629); Isaac van Swanenburg (1537-1624), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (ca 1600); Abraham Teniers (1629-70), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (date unknown); and David Teniers II (1610-90), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius de Heremiet* (1640, 1644, 1645, and four versions all dated 1647).

modern-day France).[37] Grünewald's paintings contributed a spiritual interpretation of the original sculptured shrine where the enthroned figure of Saint Anthony appears in majesty. This example is significant firstly since St Anthony was such a central figure in the establishment of Christian monasticism and secondly because the Hospital Brothers of Saint Anthony in Colmar specialised in patients suffering from St Anthony's Fire (*ignis gehenae*).[38] The right panel in the third view of the massive altarpiece is of interest to my enquiry. The panel shows St Anthony being tormented by demons – monstrous hybrid bird and reptilian creatures that trample him to the ground, beat him with sticks, and tear at his clothes – sent to torment him by Satan. St Anthony is shown struggling against and battling the demons. He almost seems to be smiling, aware perhaps of the visionary protector appearing from the heavens.

Rather than an in-depth analysis of Bosch's versions of the hermit saints, in particular his *De verzoeking van St Antonius* (1500), which elicited a massive body of secondary literature I rather devote some paragraphs to Joos van Craesbeeck's (1605-61), *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (1650) (Figure 5).[39]

Joos van Craesbeeck's interpretation is significant since it clearly alludes to Pieter Bruegel's engraving, *De verzoekingen van de heilige Antonius* (1556) (table 1), and because the gigantic face in Van Craesbeeck's version is a self-portrait. It is also used on the cover of the *Schrecken und Lust: Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius von Hieronymus Bosch bis Max Ernst* exhibition catalogue (2008). Besides the allusion to Bruegel, Gretzschel (2008) also shows that van Craesbeeck's painting contains many symbols and quotes relating directly to Bosch's iconography.

In the painting, St Anthony, marked with an A, sits under a tree, in the bottom-righthand side of the depicted scene. A woman, exposing her breasts, is tempting him with a filled nautilus cup; she is an early instance of the tempting seductress. The severed head in the centre, according to Gretzschel (2008) the entrance to Hell, may be an iconographic reference to Bruegel's drawing and engravings. On top of the head lies a pair of spectacles tied to a paper scroll which may be emblematic of the devil's deception. The rest of the unnatural scene is once more filled with fantastic hybrid creatures, half-human and half-

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[37] Creating the altarpiece must have been a mammoth undertaking – it consists of two sets of wings, and therefore displays three configurations, with St Antony appearing in the first and third views. In the first view Antony appears on the right-side panel looking on as Christ is being crucified. In the third view, St Antony is portrayed in both the side panels, and in the middle scene. On the left panel, his visit to St Paul the Hermit is shown, with the two eremites meeting in a landscape intended to show the Thebaid.

[38] St Antony's Fire, better known today as ergotism, ergotoxicosis, or ergot poisoning, is named after the saint. It is the effect of long term exposure to ergot that has infected rye bread and other cereals. Symptoms include convulsions, seizures, and spasms, diarrhoea, itching, nausea and vomiting and mental effects such as hallucinations, mania, and psychosis.

[39] Cf. Linfert (1970), Gibson (1973), Marijnsissen (1974), Franger (1976), Vandenbroeck (1987).

monster. The figures riding barrels and creatures being born from avian eggs are also common to Bosch and symbolise drunkenness and overindulgence – the very temptations St Anthony must overcome, and indicative of Van Craesbeeck's picaresque framing.

Van Craesbeeck's *De verzoekingen van de heilige Antonius* may be interpreted as a metapictorial depiction of a temptation. Van Craesbeeck's painting displays gruesome phantasms and apparitions as demonic imagery in a self-aware picaresque painting. It also engages with Bruegel and Bosch's interpretations, reflecting upon the artistic processes of depiction and figuration. The severed head is Van Craesbeeck's own, revealing self-aware reflexivity on the part of the artist. A last aspect that contributes to Van Craesbeeck's painting's metapictoriality is the fact that it was used as the *Schrecken und Lust* exhibition catalogue cover, since this means it has been adopted as a striking summary of the contemporary discourse surrounding depictions of the legend.

Van Craesbeeck's temptation depiction achieves its seventeenth century image powers in reverberation with the other temptation depictions – including Schöngauer, Grünewald, Bosch, and Bruegel's interpretations – with which it is in dialogue and to which it refers.[40] Van Craesbeeck's *De verzoekingen van de heilige Antonius,* however, is not a typical example of the 'tormenting' affective image powers of depictions based on Athanasius' narrative, since it realises its hypericonic dynamics in a decidedly picaresque mode. The scene with the massive severed head seems to be something from a dream, which, combined with Van Craesbeeck's play with size and scale, points toward a world-upside-down. Van Craesbeeck also performs an act of self-ridicule in using his own face as the entrance to Hell, and he employs comically grotesque forms for the demons gushing out of this open mouth, rather than monstrously grotesque forms, such as those found in Schöngauer and Grünewald's interpretations, for example.

The audience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would have been as distressed by depictions of the legend, as Anthony had been in the Egyptian desert; tormented by the affective power of images. Like Anthony, spectators would have struggled with the question whether these visions and apparitions were real, wondering where they had come from and who had sent them to torment St Anthony:

> [...] were they real objects of vision, or as the sceptics and atheists claimed,
> products of the imagination and of melancholy or of other illnesses; could they
> result from atmospheric conditions or be simulated by art; were they natural
> effects mistaken for supernatural ones, or optical illusions created by Satan;

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[40] In the picaresque holding pattern, Van Craesbeeck's *De verzoekingen van de heilige Antonius* must have resonated with the Surrealist audience, and since it was used as the *Schrecken und Lust* exhibition catalogue cover it clearly still resonates with audiences today.

how was it possible for one to see a spectre and the other not; what visible forms did spectres take; and how did they play tricks on the external sense of vision? (Clark 2007: 219).

Image theorists, such as Gibson (1980), Mitchell (1986), and Belting (2011), are today involved in debates surrounding so-called 'mental images', yet this debate has in point of fact been on-going since time immemorial. In *Vanities of the eye: vision in early modern European culture* (2007), Clark explains that in a particular period of roughly 250 to 300 years, early modern European philosophers and thinkers discussed in endless detail the "precise powers of demons to intervene in both the spiritual and physical world" (Clark 2007: 3). These demonic powers included the disruption of cognitive processes by physically entering the body, either brain or eye or both, generating and moving images around in them at will.

Thus, during the Middle Ages and early modern period, it was believed that the variously styled visions, *phantasmata*, glamours, apparitions, spectres, hallucinations, dreams and other mental images sent to torment Anthony were fiendish demons sent by the devil.[41] Since the validity of supernatural visionary interactions was judged according to the personal attributes and conduct of the person involved and the circumstances surrounding their experience, there could be no doubt, in the mind of an early modern spectator for example, as to the veracity of St Anthony's tormenting experiences. Anthony's experiences in the desert – the domain of demons – were as authentic as Christ's temptations by Satan had been (Clark 2007:226).

During the same period, human imagination gained newfound priority, with few doubting its power to influence and facilitate visual perception (Clark 2007: 39, 45). However, this new prominence brought with it a dramatic increase in the imagining's epistemological notoriety. It was an old but persistent idea that, whatever its indispensable contribution to human mental processes and social life, the imagination was also an unreliable faculty. This would slowly start to change in the eighteenth century, when Immanuel Kant developed his notion of the productive human imagining faculty, *Einbildungskraft*, to which I refer again in the following chapter.

Kant's thought was a major impulse in the development of secularised ideas of the genius artist as prophet, elevated by nature above ordinary humankind by being exclusively gifted

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[41] Demonic glamours were believed to be visions sent by the devil, and that they held absolute control over human perception, allowing them to force infinite and ceaseless images into the human brain, making anything seem to be anything else and to make what is absent present (Clark 2007: 123). Apparitions included ghosts as well as spirit manifestations and visions in general. Apparitions could take on many forms – they could be visions of "apostles, bishops, martyrs, confessors, virgins and other Saints, or demons in disguise" (Clark 2007: 209).

with creative imagination and originality. Kant's contribution influenced visual artists and their depictions of the temptation legend, as well as the reception of Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*. The effects of this development will eventually be felt by the Surrealist's as well. No longer will the belief exist that visionary images have a demonic origin, but rather that such images are produced by the imagination, and in Surrealist philosophy, by the subconscious and unconscious workings of human imagining.

2.4   The saint as modern artist

Athanasius' narrative is an early Christian hagiographic text, whereas Gustave Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* is a narrative written in the modern era as a literary text. Flaubert, best known for *Madame Bovary* (1857), spent nearly thirty years working on the legend of St Anthony and would eventually write three versions; Dickey (2013) calls the temptation "the ghost lingering behind all of Flaubert's better works". Harpham (1987: 141) formulates the reason why Flaubert chose to return to the tale again and again in the following terms, which link the figure of St Anthony with inversive nineteenth-century modernist notions, for instance of the cultural hero, or prophetic genius as *sacer vates*, *poètes maudits* and the Decadent movement:

> St Anthony may be the subject of more representations than any other historical person not from Scripture in the Western tradition, and the reason for his evergreen currency may lie in the synchrony between the trials of the ascetic hero and those of the creative artist.

The ascetic hero, Anthony, becomes a metaphor for misunderstood creative genius, or as Rookmaaker (1965: 6-7) writes, the view of the artist as prophet. The belief that poets are divinely inspired already existed in ancient Greece, and a demythologised version of the notion was taken up again by Immanuel Kant in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790). Hereafter the artist came to be viewed as a prophet, high priest, cultural hero, or at least a spiritual leader of mankind. The idea that eventually developed, that of the misunderstood genius artist, can be seen as a secularised version of the older idea of the poet as a divinely inspired prophet.

Just as the ascetic chose to live life outside of the 'normal' urban community, not subscribing to the norms and rules of that society, and being misunderstood by his contemporaries, so Rookmaaker (1965: 8) explains, was the nineteenth century artist:

> "…de kunstenaar is een mens die zich werkelijksheidsvreemd gedraagt; zijn hoge roeping en zijn geniale dispositie stellen hem in zekere zin boven de (burgerlijke) wetten en norme, maar ze vervreemden hem van het maatschappelijke leven".

Flaubert's Temptation becomes an implicit artist's hagiography.[42] So many artists portrayed the *topos* of the temptation of St Anthony after the publication of Flaubert's novel because they were fascinated by Anthony as a metaphorical figure for the artist. Importantly, this idea of the artist as prophet "kreeg een meer geseculariseerde inhoud" (Rookmaaker 1965: 8), just as Flaubert's reimagining also secularised the St Anthony legend.

Flaubert's secular retelling, however, not only aestheticized the legend, it also became sexualised. In Flaubert's version Anthony is tempted by various seductresses. Firstly, the "Queen of Sheba […] came to tempt him", next came a "vision of a beautiful dusky maid" which revealed itself to Anthony "as the spirit of voluptuousness", and later he is visited by a prostitute with "amorous lips". He is then visited by "a woman so magnificently attired that she emits rays around her" (Flaubert 2008). The kind of temptation Anthony must overcome has changed from demons, dragons, and all sorts of beasts, to women who have their own unique power.[43]

After the publication of Flaubert's narrative, visual representations of the legend underwent a similar transformation. In visual examples influenced by Flaubert's version, Anthony was no longer tormented by frightening hybrid beasts, but by seductive *femme fatales*. The nude seductress is far more prevalent in later depictions. Where depictions based on Athanasius' version had had a tormenting affect on spectators, seductive depictions painted after Flaubert's reimagining were meant to shock the bourgeois spectator.

2.5   Flaubertian St Anthony and his seductions

After Gustave Flaubert published the final version of his *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1874) another flourishing of paintings occurred, this time in France.[44] From this body of work I have selected four central cases.

Odilon Redon (1840-1916) created three sets of lithographs (1888, 1889, and 1896) to illustrate Flaubert's novel. Redon is significant since he specifically cites Flaubert in the titles

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[42] Artists such as Paul Gauguin or Vincent van Gogh, for example, are in a manner of speaking, modern-day Antony's.

[43] Flaubert does also describe hideous, winged, howling, and hissing creatures, some with flames sprouting from their nostrils, i.e. dragons, as well as other venomous serpents that form part of Antony's nightmare vision.

[44] More examples painted after the publication of Gustave Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* include Louis Gallait (1810-87), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1848); Théodore Chassériau (1819-56), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1869); Eugène Isabey (1804-86), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1869); Paul Cézanne (1939-1906), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1870 and 1877); Alexandre Louis Leloir (1843-84), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1871); Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1883); Aimé-Nicolas Morot (1850-1913), *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1902); and Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), *Die Versuchung des heilige Antonius* (1906).

to his lithographs and because he lived just prior to the rise of Surrealism, the mysterious imagery of his imaginative work in the mystical mode helped prepare the ground for the movement in France. Redon made three series of lithographs to illustrate Flaubert's *La tentation de saint Antoine*, and according to Dickey (2013), Redon's series' "finally unlocked the strangeness and decadent symbolism that Flaubert had dreamt of but which he could never quite evoke on the page". Redon's illustrations are filled with bodies and shapes that are free of any seemingly natural order; they are grotesquely rendered. His use of light and shadow, particularly in his use of the pure black offered by lithography, accurately stir the sense of mystery and despair that Flaubert had intended but could never quite describe or evoke.

The third set, created in 1896 consists of 24 illustrations, one of which in particular warrants comment.[45] Figure 6 shows illustration number 16, *Je suis toujours la grande Isis! Nul n'a encore soulevé mon voile!* or "I am always the great Isis! No one has yet raised my veil!" wherein the veiled female figure of Isis appears from the shadow, as Anthony cowers in the corner. With this particular illustration Redon shows how St Anthony's temptations have changed into enticing, alluring, seductive *femme fatale*. With the entire series, directly referring to Flaubert, Redon situates his illustrations within the sexualised and secularised impulse embraced after Flaubert's recounting, which also means that in Redon's versions, Anthony has become metaphorical of the artist.

Lovis Corinth (1885-1925) painted two versions in his vitalist and expressionist temper, *Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius* (1897), and *Die Versuchung der heiligen Antonius (nach Gustave Flaubert)* (1908) (Figure 7), as well as two etchings dated 1894 and 1919. I am particularly interested in the second version since it refers to Flaubert in its title, although both versions have undergone the same secularising and sexualising changes as in the Flaubertian narrative. Moreover, Corinth's interpretation also positions Anthony as the metaphorical artist.

In this version, Corinth portrays Anthony as a young man, placing him in a scene that is quite exotic and colourful. Besides Anthony and the seductresses, Corinth includes an elephant, a horse and monkeys, as well as other hybrid beasts. Anthony is surrounded by eight women in various stages of undress, a look of dread on his face. As he tries to back away from one female hand reaching out to him, he inadvertently nears another. In his right hand, Anthony holds a skull and a scourge, an obvious reference to *vanitas* depictions at odds with the wild and exotic scene appearing like a harem. He seems to be trapped among these exotic creatures, women and animals both. Anthony himself is also only partly dressed, with only a

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[45] The first series *La tentation de saint Antoine, Gustave Flaubert* (1888) consists of eleven illustrations, while the second series, dating from 1889, consists of eight illustrations.

robe tied around his middle, apparently his self-scouring interrupted by the appearance of the apparitional scenery and figures. Notice behind him, the lower section of a crucifix, Christ's nailed feet just visible above the monkey.

Corinth's depiction, with its exotic animals and flowing fabrics, discloses something of the bio-organic vigour and animation of the picaresque pattern with its preference for dance-like movements. However, Anthony seems to be caught in a monumental, heroic struggle, with Corinth portraying his body in curved movement. The terrified expression on Anthony's face, betraying the agonising seductive nature of the visions he must overcome, functioning as the catalyst for the power of images over Anthony and spectators alike.

An artist with a pronounced interest in St Anthony as an artist-figure was Max Beckmann (1884-1950) (Cf. Belting 1984). Beckmann's *Versuchung* triptych (1936-37), also called *Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius* (Figure 8), is the second of nine triptychs painted by the artist (Lackner 2013). The handwritten title of this work is simply *Versuchung,* which clarifies why there is no central Anthony character, nor specific temptations tormenting and seducing him. Beckmann situates the scene in the middle panel in a room which is a strange mixture of artist's studio and pagan temple, significant since he personally identified with the figure of St Anthony as metaphor of the misunderstood genius artist and prophet. However, as Belting (1984: 54) argues, Beckmann did not associate with the Surrealist movement: "For him, the present world is too modern, for the Surrealists, not modern enough".[46] Beckmann's *Versuchung* is certainly a central post-Flaubertian example, however he is not an artist in the wake of Surrealism as I conceive of the notion.

Rather I devote some paragraphs to a depiction of the temptation event by a contemporary of the Surrealists: Ivan Albright's (1897-1983), *The temptation of saint Anthony* (1944-45) (Figure 9). Albright was an American painter who associated himself with the magical realist style.[47] Although it is highly likely that he was familiar with the Surrealist movement – he was an up-and-coming artist in Chicago by the time the Surrealists fled to America – I do not believe he should be positioned within Surrealism's wake *per se* but rather 'on the edge of Surrealism' as a 'sympathetic outsider'.

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[46] "*Für ihn ist die gegenwärtige Welt zu modern, für die Surrealisten zu wenig modern*" (Belting 1984: 54).

[47] Albright associated with the magical realist style, which, although distinct from the French Surrealist movement, is nevertheless related to surrealism (Bowers 2004: 10). The development and expansion of Surrealism and Magical Realism occurred simultaneously, they are contemporaneous, and both incorporate elements of the fantastical (Bowers 2004: 11, 23). Even their given definitions bear resemblance, with Bowers (2004: 1) explaining that Magical realism is "the forced relationship of irreconcilable terms" and the "inherent inclusion of contradictory elements". Nevertheless, Magical Realism is distinct from Surrealism, for the style does not aim to explore the mind and imagination, or the subconscious and unconscious, rather wishing to investigate material reality. I refer to Magical Realism again in Chapter 5.

Albright's painting is dark and quite sombre in atmosphere, yet he uses deeply saturate colouring to great effect. At first glance it is difficult to make out the figures in the painting's nightmarish depiction; they are hidden in a chaotic mass of colours and shapes. Yet within this jumble it becomes possible to identify three figures. Anthony is lying horizontally in the middle of the painting, his robes in tatters and an utterly panic-stricken look on his face.[48] Two naked women, vulgar and lurid rather than seductive, with ghastly and monstrous faces and undead appearance are holding him tight.

Anthony is not looking toward the viewer, but both the women are, with a look of defiance on their faces, engaging spectators directly and challenging the viewer to keep looking. The figures are floating around in a cesspool: they seem to be in water, possibly the Nile River, yet the scene gives the impression of being set in some sort of cavern or grotto, with rocky outcrops behind the figures. They are surrounded by strange and terrifying creatures, including atrocious fish monsters that are almost piranha-like in appearance, baring sharp teeth. To the right of the scene are two wolves howling and snarling and baring their teeth as well.

The overall effect of Albright's interpretation, despite the presence of female figures, is tormenting rather than seductive. The tormenting figures challenge or confront the spectator: daring you to continue looking, to keep looking at them tormenting St Anthony. This challenge has a similar tormenting hypericonic affect on the spectator as it had on Anthony, knowing that even if you were to look away, Anthony would still be terrified in their fearsome clutches.

2.6   St Anthony as a Surrealist *topos*

One of the reasons for my selection of the temptation of St Anthony as a central *topos* is the fact that it was also a recurrent theme among the Surrealists. Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, Paul Delvaux, Leonora Carrington, and Dorothea Tanning all created works devoted to aspects of the topic of St Anthony's temptation, primarily inspired by the secular motivation adopted after Flaubert's appropriation of the legend. They painted these interpretations of the legend rather late in the Surrealist movement's history – all were painted after 1945 – when members of the French Surrealist movement had fled Europe and settled in America. In historical fact, these depictions were painted, literally, in the wake of Surrealism.

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[48] His facial features resemble those of the degenerate and decadent figure in Albright's previous painting, *The portrait of Dorian Gray* (1943-44) in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago – an interpretation of the decaying painting in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published in two versions in 1890 (short story) and 1891 (novel). Albright's depiction of the lurid female figures as well as the metapictorial allusion to the decrepit portrait features of Dorian Gray indicate that Albright's Antony alludes to the Flaubertain personage and critique of bourgeois *moeurs* rather than to the early Christian saint.

In 1947, the American film producer and director Albert Lewin (1894-1968), a friend of Man Ray, staged a painting competition to produce a Surrealist version of St Anthony's temptations. Lewin invited eleven artists to take part, including Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, Dorothea Tanning and Paul Delvaux (Rosemont 1998: 271).[49] Leonora Carrington, who was in a relationship with Max Ernst, also painted an interpretation of the temptation event for this competition. I refer to her version in Chapter 5, devoted to the cluster of women artists active in Mexico, as an example painted by a female artist and in the wake of Surrealism.

The temptation of St Anthony *topos* likely appeals to the Surrealists because this hagiographical legend is imbued with prominent elements of the fantastical in which the saint appears as a typical human person, despite his sainthood, vulnerable and susceptible to the affective power of apparitional imagery – either tormenting or seductive in tenor and topic. This efficacy of the fantastical in affective imagery foregrounds the centrality of the performance and direction of the imagination.

The legend includes elements of the supernatural, the wondrous, and the marvellous, which, according to Rabinovitch (2004: xvii, 3, 5), point toward 'the surreal' and focuses on the primacy of imagining. The surreal is not experienced with "retinal vision", but rather via the "visionary eye of the imagination" with its infinite potential (Rabinovitch 2004: 42). Moreover, the imaginary fictive casts of the mystical and picaresque holding patterns, directing many of the visual depictions painted both before and after the publication of Flaubert's reimagining, also resonated with members of Surrealism.

During Romanticism and from Flaubert onwards, the discovery and first concerted explorations of the unconscious occurred, particularly also as a facet of imagining (Gannon 1992: 1). The Surrealists continued these explorations into the unconscious life. They investigated such, often involuntary, imaginative operations of human imagining as the spontaneous generativity of images in dreaming, reverie, fantasising, playing, make-belief and improvising. The Surrealists aimed to extend these shared imaginative operations to all spectators.

Max Ernst's *Der Versuchung des heilige Antonius* (1945) (Figure 10) is a Surrealist example of the dangerously tormenting image, while Figure 11's *La tentation de saint Antoine* (1946) by Salvador Dalí represents a more erotically seductive depiction.[50] Both these paintings reveal

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[49] The jury of the competition was composed of Alfred Barr, the first director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Marcel Duchamp, and Sidney Janis. Ernst's version won the competition and was featured in the film, *The private affairs of Bel Ami* (1947). Today it is housed at the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, in Duisburg, Germany.

[50] The *topos* still persists today, with examples in the wake of surrealism including Bill Sala (1930 -), *The temptation of St Anthony* (date unknown); Sergei Vladimirovich Sharov (1945 -), *The temptation of St Anthony* (1969); and Jorge Villalba (1975 -), *Der heilige Antonius I* and *Der heilige Antonius II* (both versions dated 2009).

metapictoriality. Ernst's version recalls the paintings of the early Netherlandish flourishing, whereas Dalí's evokes Salvator Rosa's *Tentazioni di san Antonio* (refer to table 1), and both Ernst's and Dalí's paintings also call to mind depictions of the legend after the publication of Flaubert's reimagining.

In Ernst's painting the scene takes place near water. Anthony is shown horizontally in the foreground, wearing red robes, on his face is an expression of utmost terror. Horribly bizarre fusion creatures tear at Anthony's face and clothes. These demons are grotesque mixtures of mammals and insects, with fur and shells, claws and jagged teeth, wings and beady eyes. These grotesque hybrid creatures recall the beasts and demons of depictions based on Athanasius, appearing similar to the monsters found in Schöngauer, Bosch, Bruegel, Van Craesbeeck, and Grünewald. Anthony's horizontal position across the painting recalls Albright's version, although in Ernst's interpretation Anthony has to ward off the temptations of gruesome monstrosities, and not voluptuous seductresses.

Two elements in the background of the painting do however point toward dangerous seduction. In the middle background is a building in ruins. Its architecture forms the shape of a naked woman, mysteriously and supernaturally animated. Just a bit to the right is another nude female figure, nailed to a cross. However, it is through the tormenting demons, their claws slicing into Anthony's skin, that Ernst's *Der Versuchung des heilige Antonius* initiates its image powers. As one becomes bodily aware, empathising with Anthony as he is stretched horizontally, one cannot but help also feeling tormented by the monstrous creatures, filling this fantastically nightmarish scene.

In Dalí's erotically seductive interpretation, Anthony is shown, naked in a vast and empty landscape, in the bottom left corner, a halo around his head. In his hand he holds a protective and exorcising cross out to the temptations approaching him from afar and above; a small skull is placed on the ground in front of him. He kneels on the ground, in a position of submission toward the oncoming temptations, yet his posture is also one of heroic defiance, recalling Rosa's version.

The first to reach Anthony is a massive white horse. Apparently it is bucking away from the cross Anthony has raised toward it, for it is rearing onto its hind legs. Behind the horse are five enormous elephants on thin spindly legs, a common feature in Dalí's oeuvre. Each of the elephants carries something on its back – the first, third and fourth elephants have a naked seductive woman, and the second and last, a strange phallic shaped object, pointing towards the sky. The painting is set in the desert, with desert and blue sky stretching as far as the horizon, but from the left dark, swirling, ominous clouds approaches.

In the miniature scene at the very centre of the painting, beneath the insect-like elongated and multi-jointed legs of the horses and elephants, Dalí depicts the minute figures of a strange religious encounter — in vertical terms perhaps the narrative source of the apparitions. The slivers of sunlight breaking through the darkening clouds illuminate the scene of a figure in red bearing a cross who confronts a skeletal being, as a mother-and-child walk away. The cross-bearing figure — perhaps an allusion to Christ's temptation in the desert — is strengthened by the presence of an angel. It is in this central encounter – the narrative source of St Anthony's visions – that Dalí's *La tentation de saint Antoine´s* image powers reside.

The naked Anthony in the corner might be heroically posed, and when combined with the bare-breasted women and phallic objects are meant to scandalise and outrage spectators. Yet that is only with one's initial confrontation with Dalí's *La tentation de saint Antoine.* As one's gaze is drawn into the miniature scene at the centre of the painting, toward the religious encounter that is more mystical and supernatural than it is erotic, one realises that these figures are the origin of the strange apparitions, and that they are the figures with the true powers over St Anthony and spectators – as they evoke the apparitions confronting St Anthony, they activate a cascade of apparitional imagery in the spectator, prompting an involuntary generation and spontaneous surge and flow of oneiric imagery – a clear Surrealist example of hypericonic dynamics.

In conclusion, key depictions of the *topos* of the temptation of St Anthony portray supernatural apparitions, visions, spectres, and demons, as living, talking, interacting moving images. In this chapter, I have shown that the images carried in such paintings also have the ability to exert a power over imaginatively engaged spectators. As the visions and apparitions exerted their powers over St Anthony in the desert, certain key depictions are able to exert a tormenting or seductive power on participating spectators. I used the St Anthony *topos* to demonstrate this particular type of affective image power – which I call their 'hypericonic dynamics' – since these paintings enact their hypericonicity on spectators through the emergent actions and activities involved in image creation – depicting, figuring, and imagining the processes of playing, make-belief, dreaming, fantasising, fictionalising, improvising, and intuiting, among many others.

I showed that the Surrealists were likely fascinated by the legend of St Anthony since, besides the legend's emphasis of the imagination, its depictions exert forceful and potent affective image powers over spectators. I do not believe the Surrealists were as concerned with the notion of the artist as prophet, as they were to shock the bourgeois spectator – in the case of St Anthony, through torment or seduction – into radical action. The Surrealists intended to shock and provoke the bourgeois audience from conformity and complacency to revolutionary action, to transform society through the potency of their art.

In the following chapter, I intend to employ French Surrealism as catalyst for a brief theoretical exploration of the surrealist imagination. I limit my exploration to the productive imagination, celebrated by the Surrealists through the juxtaposed worlds of their 'poetic images', and the techniques, procedures and activities which directed, influenced, focussed, and determined Surrealist image creation. I continue to develop 'hypericonic dynamics' as a means of art historical hermeneutics, involving the actions, activities, and practices of picturing, figuring, and imagining.

Figure 3. Martin Schöngauer, *Heiliger Antonius, von Dämonen gepeinigt* (1480-90)

Figure 4. Matthias Grünewald (ca 1475-1528), *Isenheim altarpiece, The temptation of saint Anthony* (1512-16) (detail)

Figure 5. Joos van Craesbeeck, *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (1650)
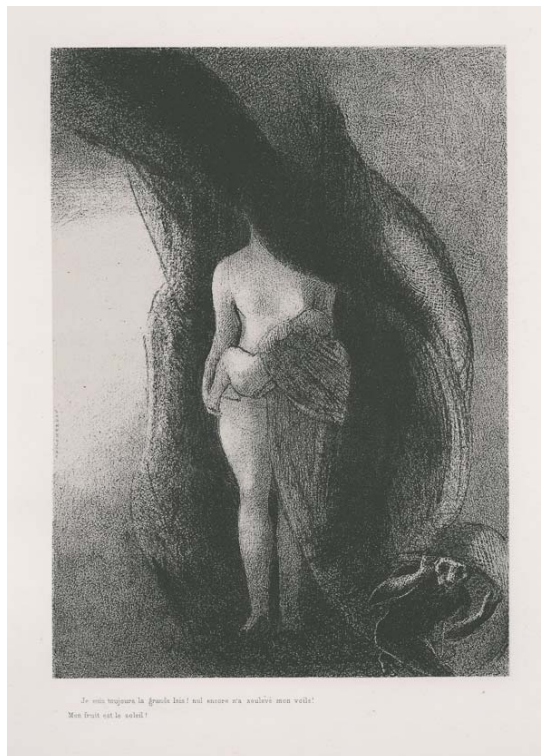
Figure 6. Odilon Redon, *La tentation de saint Antoine, Gustave Flaubert* (1896). 16, Je suis toujours la grande Isis! Nul n'a encore soulevé mon voile!

Figure 7. Lovis Corinth, *Die Versuchung der heiligen Antonius (nach Gustave Flaubert)* (1908)

Figure 8. Max Beckmann, *Die Versuchung des Heiligen Antonius* (1936-37)

Figure 9. Ivan Albright, *The temptation of saint Anthony* (1944-45)

Figure 10. Max Ernst, *Der Versuchung des heilige Antonius* (1945)

Figure 11. Salvador Dalí, *La tentation de saint Antoine* (1946)

Chapter 3: The Surrealist imagination

The human imagination is central to Surrealist thought and action. In the *First Manifesto* Breton (2010: 26) writes: "Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought". He is, of course, referring to imagining and imaginative actions. He also speaks of the "beloved imagination" (Breton 2010: 4) with its unsparing and all-consuming qualities, and later of the importance of returning to the "sources of poetic imagination" (Breton 2010: 18).

Also in the *First Manifesto*, Breton calls attention to the importance of automatic writing, calling Surrealism "psychic automatism in its pure state" (Breton 2010: 26). He emphasises the importance of dreams, play, and objective chance to imaginative creations. In the *Second Manifesto* he compares Surrealist imaginative actions to the alchemical practices of the fourteenth century. Lastly, as opposed to the purported diluted imagination and stale conventionalism of art preferred by bourgeois taste, the Surrealists felt a keen affinity to so-called 'primitive art'. This attraction is manifest in the first exhibition of Surrealist painting in 1925 which was accompanied by a collection of tribal sculptures.

The Surrealists did not view imagining as removed, isolated or separated from reality. In their estimation, the domain of the imagination has as much claim to reality as any other (Bohn 1986: 58; Grant 2005: 31). Moreover, members of the French movement believed the imagination to have the power to create unknown worlds, and to transform and shape universes. They also held the radical notion that revolution – socio-political and artistic – could be brought about through the rebellious, subversive, anti-traditional and anti-conventional exploitation of the imagination.

It is my suggestion that a unique 'Surrealist imagination' can be identified among members of the French movement, and that such a type of imagination is also present in the surrealist time-current or dynamic. To my mind, this 'imagination' is a radicalised view of the act of imagining, which does not conform to the conventional or typical, or to expected forms of imagining. This radical 'surrealist imagination' is also the source or origin of the 'surrealist poetic image'. Such images, as defined by Reverdy (Breton 2010: 20) and Breton (2010: 38), juxtapose disparate realities to create affective surrealist images, both literary and artistic, which are supposed to shock or jolt readers and spectators, so as to shake them from bourgeois complacency into some form of radical action. The Surrealist creation of incongruent, divergent, and juxtaposed worlds is the artistic work of the productive imaginative faculty, or *Einbildungskraft*.

A systematic difference exists between the basic or common human imagination operative in everyday aesthetics, and the specialised and trained imagination of creative artists (cf. Saito 2010). With Romanticism, and the rise of the notion of the misunderstood creative genius-artist, the idea of the artistic imagination became supercharged. The Surrealists developed the high Romantic estimation of the artistic imagination by revitalising the basic human imagination from its subconscious roots (Gannon 1992: 1). In fact, the Romantics had anticipated the findings of Freud, to whose exploration of the unconscious the Surrealists are heavily indebted.[51] Freud realised that the unconscious and subconscious function as the "mytho-poetic core of imagination" (Ricoeur 1970: 35).

3.1   Productive imagining

A striking example of a Surrealist artist's productive imagination at work is Max Ernst's *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1942) (Figure 12). In Ernst's view, the last great myth of artistic creation was "the myth surrounding the creative process", and he went to great lengths to study this "most complex mechanism of all, artistic creation" (Nolan 1998). Ernst believed he came as a spectator to the birth of his artworks.

The French term *'peinture'* means both 'works of painting' and the 'art of painting' – Ernst is thus referring both to the automatic painting on the canvas depicted within the painting, as well as to Surrealist art-making in the inclusive sense of artistry.[52] Ernst's title also alludes to Breton's eponymous 1928 essay*,* itself inspired by Pierre Naville's opinion that there is no such thing as surrealist painting (Breton 2002: 6). With this painting in particular, Ernst evidently wants to argue that it very much does exist, since it is known that he thoroughly disagreed with Naville (Nolan 1998).

Le Surréalisme et la peinture is a difficult work to describe because of the enigmatic, almost formless, almost unidentifiable, yet organic shape that dominates the painting, which is itself shown to be painting an automatic drawing in the manner of Masson or Miró. This shape's back-half is elephant-like and the arm that is doing the painting is comparable to an elephant trunk. The middle part of the body is comprised of three bird-like heads and beaks which are wrapped together. The bird-like creatures are resting on top of what appears to be a box containing the instruments and tools of the painter including a sponge and palette knife, which, together with the title of the work, present clues as to its meaning.

The organic and massive elephant-like shape is likely not a self-portrait, but rather an imaginative depiction of the strength and substance of Surrealist artistry, drawing its

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[51] According to Ricoeur (1970: 32-34), Freud belongs to the "school of suspicion"; he recognised the "illusions of consciousness". Freud acknowledged that the fundamental category of consciousness is a relation of what is hidden opposed to what is shown.
[52] Cf. *Nouveau Petit Larousse* (1972): 755.

inspiration from the unconscious flow of thought. The elephant-shape may be an image of the unconscious, and the smaller bird-figures apparently protected, nourished, embraced, and caressed by the surrounding organic elephant-shape are perhaps evocative of dreams, the canvas being their 'concrete' expression or utterance. The motif of a hand holding the brush, touching the canvas, has an avian shape echoing the interior bird-figures at the centre, perhaps suggesting some analogy or affinity between inner and outer life. The brush at the end of the extended elephantine trunk functions like the vibrating needle of a seismograph, or some similar registering mechanism without being consciously controlled. Yet unlike the seismograph this is a vibrantly flowing and organic process of mental recording which produces a painting. The resultant painting is a Surrealist "*geesteskind*" (a dream child or brainchild) as spiritual progeny of Surrealist expression. The painting presents a pictorial interpretation, thematising certain tenets in Surrealist thinking (Ubl 2013: 11).

Le Surréalisme et la peinture depicts the creation of an artwork, its productive, imaginative genesis or birth. Like ontogenesis, giving birth to meaning, and phylogenesis, "the evolutionary development [of an] organism through a succession of forms" (Blunden 2012), we find in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* the imaginary unfolding process or artistic genesis of a Surrealist painting, in terms of a quasi-natural evolutionary process.[53] Imaginativity and the unconscious form the gametes that fertilise an 'egg' of inspiration, to form the zygote – the productive combination of imaginative activity and unconscious inspiration – to eventually give birth to, or create a painting comprising intricately juxtapositioned and interlocked images; in *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* we are witnesses to the genesis of Surrealist artistry.

The automatic painting-on-the-canvas within the painting is the creation of the enigmatically powerful, as well as fertile shape that is Surrealism. Like mother-and-child, what had once been a single being has now become two separate entities. The giant shape, or Surrealism, gives birth to automatic drawing. Moreover, Ernst's *Le Surréalisme et la peinture*, in staging actions and activities of depiction and figuring refers to itself, to its own nature as a picture; it is metapictorially self-aware and self-reflexive (Mitchell 1994: 35), showing Surrealism's delving into the unconscious and bringing what is hidden there to the surface through its uncontrolled flowing onto a canvas. *Le Surréalisme et la peinture's*

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[53] Ernst titled a collection of frottages – his own semi-automatic technique – *Histoire naturalle* (ZurLoye 2010: 3).

thematic focus is the very artists' theorisations and debated and contested conceptions thematised in Surrealist artistry.[54]

I view the imagination as a central facet of human existence. As a consequence of the Surrealists' interest in the actions and activities of the imagination, particularly their emphasis on its subconscious processes, one starts to realise that the imagination is constantly at work, even if one is unaware of its operations. A quick internet search reveals that such diverse philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Schelling, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, to name only a few, all devoted parts of their philosophy to the study this most basic aspect of human life.

Clearly the imagination presents a singularly intriguing field of inquiry. Sadly, epistemological and rationalist investigation into the human imagination has historically been disparaging, and philosophers – from Plato to Descartes – posited that its operations cannot be trusted. This view, although still in certain respects in effect in the current climate, with the natural sciences reigning supreme, was first challenged by Immanuel Kant. He developed the notion of the productive human imagining faculty, or *Einbildungskraft*, which would become crucial to the Surrealist's conception of the creative production of Surrealist 'poetic images'.

A detailed investigation into the history of philosophical thought surrounding the imagination necessarily falls outside the scope of my study. Therefore, in the following section, I only briefly mention certain key figures, specifically focusing my attention on Kant and Paul Ricoeur, a more recent philosopher to also address the productive human imagination. Kant and Ricoeur were instrumental in constructive deliberation into productive imagining, the universal human imagining faculty. This human ability creates – whether conscious or unconscious, discovered or constructed – 'surrealist poetic images' such as Ernst's *Le Surréalisme et la peinture.*

3.2   Pertinent moments in the philosophical history of the imagination

The idea of the imagination, although subject to cultural and historical change expressed in diverse mental and material, individual and collective images, is a universal human ability, a prime mode of human existence (Huppauf & Wulf 2009: 16). The category of 'imagination' encompasses the Hebrew *yetser*, the Greek *phantasia* and *eikasia*, the Latin *imaginatio*, the German *Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie*, and, of course, the English and French

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[54] Referring to Panofsky's method of image interpretation, Roque (2002: 274) points out that in a painting a motif can be likened to form, whereas the theme relates to the subject matter. In other words, an artwork's 'thematic focus' refers to the topic or subject matter, or focus or theme of that painting.

imagination.[55] Although these terms do have distinctive cultural meanings they share a common reference to humankind's image-making faculty, because the imagination evokes absent objects, constructs material forms (such as artworks), and projects non-existent phenomena (as in dreams) (Ricoeur 1991: 169-70).

Our ability to 'image' or to 'imagine' has historically been understood in two central ways: as a faculty of representation, reproducing images from some preceding reality, or as a creative faculty – producing unique, original images (Kearney 1988: 15). Consequently, these basic notions of imagination have been used to refer to acts of everyday experience as well as to artistic practice. The imagination is a universal functioning of human life, which is shared by all, yet operates individually. In the specific domain of the arts, a fertile imagination, for both the creation and reception of artworks, is essential, since to paraphrase Calvin Seerveld (1987: 46-49), artistic activity is quintessentially imaginative.[56]

However, throughout its uneven and controversial history it has often been judged as secondary and its bad reputation has a history that is much older than its recent decline (Huppauf & Wulf 2009: 2).[57] From its earliest history the imagination has been vilified and derided. Plato viewed the faculty with suspicion treating imagining as a perceptual error (cf. Seerveld 1987: 45; Kearney 1988: 87-88; Sheppard 2014: 2-3). He does nevertheless turn to metaphor and allegory, in other words, 'mental' and verbal images, to explain his philosophy (Brann 1991: 38; Thompson 2009: 39-41). Aristotle situates imagining as a faculty of the soul, with the imagination functioning as an intermediary between sensory and conceptual activity (cf. Cocking 1991: 270; Sheppard 2014: 6-7). Nevertheless for Aristotle, as for Plato, imagination ultimately remains subservient to reason. Imagining, for both philosophers, remains largely a reproductive rather than a productive activity (Cocking 1991: 21-22). During the Middle Ages thinkers like Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure all warned against the imagination, believing it to be an unreliable and unpredictable faculty

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[55] The main Hebraic term for imagination is *yetser*, derived from the same root, '*yzr*,' as the terms for 'creation' (*yetsirah*), 'creator' (*yotser*) and 'create' (*yatsar*) (Kearney 1988: 39; Thompson 2009: 11).

[56] Differentiating between the universal, shared, individual, and artistic imaginations is a systematic, yet necessary distinction.

[57] In the current climate the natural sciences reign supreme, and they have quite a low tolerance for the imagination (Brann 1991: 193), or, as Huppauf & Wulf (2009: 1-2) explains: "in experimental theories of perception and cognition, the neural sciences and technologies of the media seem much more promising and productive in terms of theorising visual perception and answering the question of what an image is than a return to the long and dubious history of the imagination". Kearney (1988: 3) calls the imminent demise of the imagination a "postmodern obsession". In the postmodern attitude the imagination's primacy is once again being disputed, running the "gauntlet of critical suspicion" (Kearney 1998: 179-81). Lacan, for example, views the imagination as a narcissistic illusion, while Althusser applies it, in the Marxist sense, to false consciousness. Nevertheless, some theorists do relate to the imagination in a more affirmative manner, with Kearney (1998: 218) distinguishing Kristeva's *melancholic* imagination, Vattimo's *fragile* imagination, and Lyotard's *narrative* imagination.

(Kearney 1998: 3). It was only with Immanuel Kant and the German Idealists, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, that the productive imagination became recognised by mainstream Western thought (Kearney 1988: 155-156).

Kant declared the imagination to be the primary and indispensable precondition of all knowledge (Warnock 1976: 26-31). His philosophy emerges from two prominent strains in mid-Enlightenment German thought, and his views on the imagination reflect an attempt to mediate between them: one strain, descended from Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten, emphasises the inherently organic, dynamic sensibility of the mind and its harmonious understanding of the world, while the second strain, to which Kant pays equal attention, is the empirical, scientific and mathematical. In attempting to reconcile these divergent ways of thinking, Kant realised he had to create a third conception of imagination which would synthesise them into a unified whole (Engell 1981: 128-29).

Kant recognised the importance of the imagination for its unifying activities, integrating multiple cognitive and sensory impressions (Seerveld 1987: 44-46). "Nothing could be known about the world unless it was first preformed and transformed by the synthetic power of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*)" (Kearney 1988: 156-57). Initially, he recognised our imaginative power based on direct sensory or empirical contact with the world. This faculty reproduces and connects sense experiences, building a comprehensive understanding of reality (Engell 1981: 130). Significantly, at this stage, Kant has yet to distinguish the productive imagination from the reproductive imagination.

Kant quickly realised that he relied too heavily on the empirical approach. By the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787), although he does not delete all references to it as reproductive, he emphasises the imagination's transcendental function (Warnock 1976: 26; Engell 1981: 130). When Kant speaks of a 'transcendental imagination' he attributes imagining as the hidden condition of all knowledge (Brann 1991: 89). Kearney (1988: 168-69) writes:

> The imagination, Kant argued, must no longer be conceived exclusively according to the *mimetic model of representation*. It is to be reconceived in terms of the *transcendental model of formation* – hence the need to distinguish between the 'reproductive' and 'productive' functions of the imagination. [The] act of imagining is not merely a secondary mediation between sensation and intellect but the common 'root' of both these forms of knowledge.

Kant was the first to distinguish between the reproductive and productive imaginations, and consequently the first to describe the productive *Einbildungskraft,* or productive human imagining faculty.[58]

Imagination has been an enduring, though often discreet, preoccupation of Paul Ricoeur, who speaks less of imagination, than of symbol, metaphor, myth, dream, narrative and social imaginary (Brann 1991: 151; Kearney 1996: 173).[59] Ricoeur's essential contribution to the philosophy of imagination was his shifting of the framework of the discussion from the perceptual to the linguistic (Michell 1989: 42-43). Ricoeur proposed that a theory of metaphor, or semantic innovation, offers the possibility of relocating the problem of imaging and imagining from the domain of perception to that of language (cf. Ricoeur 1991: 123; Ricoeur 1991(a): 168; Kearney 1998: 143).

Because the imagination was such a prevalent element in Ricoeur's philosophy, I refer to his theory of productive imagining, which he set out in his unpublished '*Lectures on imagination'*.[60] Ricoeur opposes the reproductive with productive imagining, maintaining that there are "four domains of productive imagination" (Taylor 2006: 93-94). Firstly, Ricoeur identifies the domain of the social and cultural imagination, the second and third domains are the epistemological and poetic imaginations. Ricoeur recognises religious symbols as the last domain.

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[58] Kant, in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), describes more facets of the imagination. He considers the imagination in terms of aesthetics and subjectivity – the imagination is central and unique when it is involved in aesthetic judgements (Warnock 1976: 35; Engell 1981: 137). It is here that he states his famous dictum, related to the 'free play' of the imagination in aesthetics and poetry. Kant also identifies the intersubjective power of imagining (Gaiger 2002: 128-29). The aesthetic 'taste' judgement is innately universal since every human being possesses a creative imagination. "Aesthetic pleasure possesses a 'quasi-objective' quality; it is shared by everyone who perceives the inner finality of an art work" (Kearney 1988: 172-73).

[59] Since Kant various philosophers have deliberated upon numerous facets related to the imagination. Schelling defined imagination as that creative power which reconciles the age-old oppositions of Western metaphysics – freedom and necessity, being and becoming, the universal and particular, the eternal and the temporal (Kearney 1988: 178-79). Husserl wrote that it was with phenomenology that the imagination's function as a dynamic and constitutive act of intentionality was finally uncovered (Kearney 1998: 13). Heidegger appropriated *Einbildungskraft* so as to establish the temporalizing and synthetic powers of imagining as the key to our understanding of human *Dasein* (Kearney 1998: 46). Merleau-Ponty wished imagination to be recognised as a fundamental expression of Being, continually supporting the idea of a unique and irreducible intentionality of imagination (Kearney 1998: 120). A French contemporary of the Surrealists to scrutinise imagination is Jean-Paul Sartre, who set out to determine not only what imagining meant as an activity of consciousness but how such an activity informed our daily *being-in-the-world* (Cf. McKenna 1974: 65; Sartre 2004: 179-188). Sartre devoted his first two philosophical studies to the study of imagination (Brann 1991: 131), with the first, *L'Imagination* (later translated as *Imagination*), appearing in 1936. His principal investigation into the imagination, *L'Imaginaire: psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination* or *The psychology of imagination* was published in 1940 (Kearney 1998: 56-57). Another author to also expand on more recent developments of philosophical investigation into imagination is Eva Brann, in *The world of the imagination: sum and substance* (1991).

[60] In 1975, Ricoeur delivered a series of "Lectures on imagination" at the University of Chicago. Taylor's (2006) comments are based upon transcriptions from the lecture series.

Ricoeur asks whether it is possible for us to comprehend any place that is not determined by an original, somewhere that is not duplicated. According to Taylor (2006: 96), Ricoeur argued that the easiest example to grasp is the social utopia, since the literal translation of utopia is in fact a 'nowhere'. Ricoeur argues that the 'nowhere' not bound by an original can be found in fiction, since "fictions do not reproduce a previous reality, but rather produces a new reality" (Taylor 2006: 97). For Ricoeur, three of the four domains of productive imagination – the social and cultural, epistemological, and poetic – come under the rubric of being fictions in this sense.[61]

Thus, Kant introduced the notion of a productive human imagining faculty, called *Einbildungskraft.* Ricoeur appropriated the notion of the productive imagination, acknowledging its function in creating realities that have not previously existed, recognising its function in the poetic domain. The productive imagination is that faculty of the imagination which creates the juxtaposed worlds of 'surrealist poetic images'. Significantly, the Surrealists particularly emphasised the subconscious, unconscious, and involuntary functions of the productive imagination, employing such imaginative subconsciously 'directed' activities and procedures as automatism, chance, dream, and playing. Key surrealist 'poetic images', whether discovered or constructed, have the power to strike engaged spectators like thunderbolts, triggering hypericonic events. These images juxtapose incongruent realities in such surprising or enigmatic ways that spectators who imaginatively, keenly, and perceptively respond to the artworks' directive to participate, cannot but be affected by the power of images.

Imagination is crucial for the hypericonic dynamic to be set in motion. Both artist and spectator need a fertile productive or receptive imagination. Depictions that reveal hypericonicity display the emergent imaginative processes and actions involved in image-creation, the actions involved in depicting, figuring, and imagining. Therefore, in the remainder of this chapter as well as throughout the remainder of this thesis, the nuanced and interrelated imaginative activities of fictionalising make-believe, curiosity and wonder, discovery and fantasising, projective empathising, tactful intuition, playful improvisation, and creative conjecture will serve to guide me as I develop surrealist hypericonic dynamics.

3.3   Visionary imagining

René Magritte's self-portrait in *La Clairvoyance* (1936) (Figure 13), fuses the interplay of movement and stillness into an enigmatic metapicture, depicting the imagining activity of projection. The title of the work can be translated into meaning clear-sightedness, or more usually, as some supra-sensory kind of visionary power. Magritte suggests that as a seer or prophet, he can foretell or project the future.

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[61] The fiction in epistemological imagination, for example, is the scientific theoretical model.

Magritte depicts a fictional artist, apparently a portrait of himself, sitting in front of an easel and canvas, holding a palette in his left hand and, in his right, a paintbrush, suspended in mid-air above the canvas.[62] Magritte's head is turned away from the canvas and his attention is focused on a single avian egg, maybe a chicken, egg on a table to his left. Painted on the canvas before him is a bird in action, either a parrot or a dove, seemingly suspended in mid-flight. Magritte with astuteness and clear-sightedness, or shall I say visionary foresight, can see that the egg will become that which it actually already contains in embryo, a bird. Magritte projects the potential realised, a bird flying free.

He portrays the bird with outstretched wings. There is a definite suggestion of movement. The lonely single egg on the table is a still-life depiction – a *nature morte* – of a lifeless object, although one that in potentially, or in embryo, contains life. Thus, the picture is a lifeless physical object while the image is a vibrant event, an occasion of fantasy and fictionalising – it is firstly up to the artist and subsequently also the spectator to share in the imagination's task of negotiating the difference between these two. Magritte makes an observation regarding the nature of depiction, showing what a picture is, by making explicit the difference between stillness and movement.

Magritte also comments the character of painting and picturing; he is depicting the action of picturing, exploiting the proverbial play on the paradoxical primacy of either egg or dove as an innovative metaphor for the creation of a Surrealist work of art, thus figuring the action of figuration. His 'model' is an egg, an object with imaginative potential which he gazes at intently, but the pictured 'painting' depicts a bird, showing the image of a bird in flight. Magritte comments on the discordance between reality and representation, or everyday reality and a mysterious and imaginary surreal world. The discordance between these objects plays with what paintings are, to wit, flights of the imagination.

La Clairvoyance alludes, metapictorially, not only to the opposition between reality and representation, and the tension between images and pictures, it also depicts, or figures, the necessary interaction of model, artist, and art object. Besides including a self-portrait, *La Clairvoyance* presents the fundamental components of art theoretical aesthetics, the model or prototype, artist, work of art, and spectator. The 'poetic image' in Magritte's *La Clairvoyance,* the juxtapositioned play with movement and stillness, illustrating the tension between reality and representation, and everyday reality and cryptic sureality, is meant to intrigued engaged spectators – therein lies its power.

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[62] There is also an anonymous photograph of Magritte posing in front of this painting, repeating the scene depicted in the painting – indicating that a self-aware reflective doubling has been part of this painting's imaginative concept, as has many other works in Magritte's oeuvre.

I devote the remaining sections of this chapter to various facets of Surrealist philosophy related to imaging and imagining. Firstly, I dedicate a section to key imaginative actions and activities the Surrealists utilised in their 'poetic image' creation, namely automatism, chance, dreams, and play. The Surrealists exploited these procedures and methods precisely because they emphasise the function of the subconscious imagination. These imaginative strategies seem to be unique to the French Surrealist movement proper; the use of automatism and chance in particular is less prevalent in both the Mexican cluster and in the South African setting. Significantly, however, the fact that the Surrealists took advantage of these activities and procedures has had a lasting effect on reflection on the imagination in a more general sense.

The last remaining aspects – the Surrealists interest in alchemy and their appropriation of 'primitive' objects – are particularly pertinent to the remainder of my study of the wake of the movement. In alchemical practice random and strange elements are fused to create the philosopher's stone, and in Surrealist practice disparate worlds are merged to create poetic images; unsurprisingly members of Surrealism appropriated alchemy. In both the Latin-American and South African contexts, artists employ alchemical imagery as well. Lastly, my particular purpose for discussing the problematic notion of 'primitivism' is because in the following chapters I use the juxtaposition of cultures – western and indigenous or 'primitive' – as criteria when choosing hypericonic visual examples, as was also the case with Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio.*

3.4   Surrealist imaging actions: automatism, chance, dream & play

Among the members of French Surrealism a distinctive, radical and subversive, 'Surrealist imagination' reveals itself.[63] The radical notions these members held regarding the imagination – that the imagination has the power to provoke societal and artistic revolution – is reflected in Surrealist artistic creation. The Surrealists exploited such imaginative strategies as automatism, chance, dreams, and play, where, often, the directed and consciously controlled, rational-thinking hand of the artist is not involved, precisely because they are unconventional and non-conforming, and meant to effect intrigue in readers or spectators.

Automatism, which Breton describes as "wireless imagination" in the essay *Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité* (1927), was 'invented' in the early 1920s by Breton and Philippe Soupault (Grant 2005: 86). During the spring of 1919 the two writers created the automatic texts published in 1920 as *Les Champs Magnétiques* while they still belonged to

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[63] Precursors, in France, to members of Surrealism's philosophy regarding the imagination include Diderot and the *philosophes* of the *Encyclopédie* (Wettlaufer 2003: 85), Baudelaire, who believed the imagination to be the "creative power of man" (Rookmaaker 1972: 23), and Guillaume Apollinaire and Pierre Reverdy (Bohn 1986: 58).

Dada (Gibson 1987: 56). This text in particular and automatic writing generally would serve as a theoretical basis when Surrealism was formally instituted in 1924. *Les Champs Magnétiques* was written using a technique where the rational control and direction of the text was suspended. Breton and Soupault deemed these texts "direct outpourings of unconscious thought" (Grant 2005: 36).[64]

An artist who successfully completed numerous so-called *dessins automatiques* is André Masson. He began making these drawings in 1923, even before he met Breton, and continued with this series until 1928 (Ades 1987: 21-22).[65] It is not that strange, however, that Masson was already creating automatic drawings, since Breton and Soupault's *Les Champs Magnétiques* had already been published.

Masson's *Les sirens* (1947) (Figure 14) is a later ink drawing also made using this technique. The sirens in Masson's drawing appear closer to the legendary ocean mermaids than the sirens of Greek mythology since they have women's bodies but fins instead of legs.[66] Instead of a rocky outcropping in the ocean the sirens seem to be sitting on a person's left hand, whereas all around them swirling, churning, eddying strokes of water form a maelstrom, and these whirling vortexes create a "vertiginous feeling of disorientation" (Lomas 2000: 46). Masson had a habit of muttering aloud certain words which acted as motivation while he drew. One such word was *tournoiement,* which means 'whirling, swirling, eddying or wheeling'. *Tournoiement* also refers to the feeling of spinning inside one's head associated with vertigo, a sensation of spinning employed by Masson to create feelings of dislocation

[64] Today some might call automatism the most significant contribution of the Surrealists to the history of modern art, yet during the 1920's the Surrealist notion of artistic automatism was a highly contested issue. Grant (2005: 7) explains that many critics during the 1920's did not believe that visual art could be produced without conscious control. In *La Pienture au défi* (1930), Aragon conspicuously ignored automatism in favour of collage, establishing collage, and not automatic writing, as the theoretical basis of Surrealist artistic production (Grant 2005: 271-72). In Aragon's view, as an artistic procedure, collage was more closely aligned with the revolutionary transformation of reality than automatism. Another critique levelled against the Surrealist's use of automatism was made by Tériade in *Cahiers d'art* in 1930 (Lomas 2000: 3) and was later reiterated by Krige (1962: 20). Both men accused Surrealism of being too conscious and that the so-called 'return to instinct' undertaken by the Surrealists was unattainable, since creating automatic works was in fact a highly conscious effort, calculated and premeditated. Hence, Sylvester (1987: 9) questions to what degree Masson's drawings can strictly be called automatic. He doubts whether a highly trained and sophisticated artist's drawings can truly conform to the Surrealist definition of the notion. René Magritte and Salvador Dalí also rejected the "would-be spontaneity of automatism" (Gablik 1976: 70-71); Magritte deemed the studied use of chance to be contrived. He was more interested in dream-images as expressions of unconscious activity. Dalí viewed automatism as too passive and weak a means of artistic creation, favouring his paranoiac-critical method (Laurent & Trezise 1989: 105-06). Nevertheless, Masson's drawings are seen as key automatist contributions in the history of Surrealism.
[65] Masson started experimenting with automatic drawing in 1924, and in the first instalment of *La Révolution Surréaliste,* in December 1924, two such drawings were reproduced – the first of many to be duplicated for this periodical (Sylvester & Drew 1987: 72). Masson would eventually create thirty-six known drawings made using this procedure (Gibson 1987: 56).
[66] Sirens, in Greek mythology, are very beautiful yet extremely dangerous seductive creatures luring sailors to shipwreck with their mesmerising and captivating songs. Sirens are traditionally believed to combine women's heads and torso's with bird feathers, the legs of birds and scaly feet.

and instability in his viewers. Feelings of vertigo also evoke Roger Caillois' *ilinx* play-type (cf. Caillois 1961); *Les sirens's* dizzying affect on spectators, in other words, is also playful.

Related to the vertiginous confusions Masson aimed to create, is the notion of movement activated through automatism (Lomas 2000: 45).[67] Masson formulated a practice of graphic automatism that sought to express movement, and as Lomas (2000: 45) explains, he incorporated movement into the static image by invoking a dimension of temporality, achieved by choosing topics, such as seductive sirens calling to some unsuspecting victim, which unfold in durational time as much as they extend in space. The swirling and churning flows of water around the sirens of course enhance the feelings of motion elicited by the drawing.

Automatic writing, as practiced by Breton and Soupault, was primarily a literary device – the free flow of thought – and artists such as Masson took great efforts to extend it to the visual domain. Drawing, as *disegno* or *dessin*, has, since the Renaissance, been understood as designing and conceptualising associated with intention and planning (Maynard 2005: 7-12). The purpose of automatism – both written and drawn – was precisely not to consciously plan or design, or as Lomas (2000: 21) describes it: "the author [acts] merely as a passive conduit", like a simple mechanical recording instrument recording onto paper similarly to a seismograph recording shockwaves from elsewhere. In *Les sirens,* instead of the customary rock outcrop, Masson 'draws' the sirens sitting on a hand, which likely alludes to the conscious and intentional 'hand of the artist' that is absent in automatic drawings (Gibson 1987: 57).

Ades (1987: 33) calls Masson's drawings: "the most vivid demonstration of automatism". His drawings begin with a free movement of the hand on the paper, a movement used as a means of generating forms which may eventually become images (Sylvester 1987: 9). The drawings seemingly begin with abstract forms and over time images evolve out of them. Masson's drawings are free to explore abundant forms, shapes and configurations (Sylvester 1987: 10). Consequently, what spectators are confronted with in automatic drawings such as *Les sirens* is a form of improvisational play, where feelings of vertiginous dizziness are elicited through intuitive games of chance, or involuntary discovery.[68] Surrealists believed

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[67] The assumed 'motionlessness' of visual depictions – a consequence of the modernist focus at least since Lessing's *Laocoön* (1766) on spatiality as the medium-specific basis for the autonomy of visual art – was judged critically as a significant drawback by Surrealists whose aim were to passively record the uninterrupted flow of thought.

[68] The notion of objective chance is born from the dialectical relationship between the pairing of necessity and freedom, with Breton referring to chance as the "geometric locus [of] coincidences" (Shattuck 1965: 21), and Nadeau (1965: 206) writing about chance as the convergence of the "fortuitous and the accidental". The only true reality, in Surrealist opinion, is expressed in "the randomness and the hidden order that surrounds us". This dialectic of randomness and order represents surreality, or as Shattuck explains: "[t]o create a life entirely made up of such startling coincidences would be to attain surreality".

that fate worked through chance, transforming what is random into meaningful coincidence (Rabinovitch 2005: 30-32).[69]

Chance, according to Matthews (1977: 117), can be likened, to use his term, "a jolt", experienced by spectators. He writes:

> [S]urrealists are persuaded that man [sic] may enjoy the privilege of being able to correct the erroneous impression normally rendering him submissive to the dreary fate of acceptance. All that is required, surrealism teaches, is for him to see the natural order given a jolt [...] Asked how such a jolt is likely to be engineered, most surrealists would respond that it is produced very effectively with the aid of chance.

In other words, in *Les sirens,* Masson 'draws' the actions of improvisational chance games to hypericonically 'jolt' spectators with the power of such unconsciously directed images.

Automatism is comparable to the lessening of consciously controlled thought that accompanies falling asleep, which also often leads to the "mental manifestation of highly poetic images and phrases" (Grant 2005: 36). A Surrealist painter fascinated by dreaming was René Magritte, as evidenced by Figure 15, *La clef des songes* or *The key of dreams* (1930), one of numerous word-and-image combinations he painted.

He depicts six objects – an egg, a lady's high-heeled shoe, his signature bowler-hat, a burning candle, an empty glass and a hammer – which he combines with words, the so-called 'keys' to unravel, or decode, the dream. This painting is highly perplexing and puzzling since the keywords do not refer to the objects portrayed. The word *l'acacia* (the acacia) is combined with the egg, *la lune* (the moon) with the shoe, *la neige* (the snow) with the bowler-hat, *le plafond* (the ceiling) with the candle, *l'orage* (the storm) with the glass and *le desert* (the desert) with the hammer. The relationship between the keyword and the object is purposefully opaque, a painted lesson in the irreconcilability of words, images, and objects (Freeman 1989: 48-49; Spitz 2009: 113).[70]

Differing from many Surrealist works, Magritte paints the objects in his characteristic style – similar to schoolbook illustrations and uncomplicated reading primers with simple and certain identifications (Spitz 2009: 114). Yet Magritte's depictions are not as simple as one might think, as Breton (2002: 269-70) explains:

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[69] In the *First Manifesto*, Breton (2010: 13) calls chance a divine incomprehensibility. He also devotes some paragraphs to the workings of chance in the essays *Situation surréaliste de l'objet* (1935) and *L'Amour fou* (1937).

[70] The word-and-images games Magritte plays are part of his so-called "semiotic study" (Orban 1997: 118-120).

> Magritte's use of figurative means corresponds to a far more conscious determination than may be supposed, since it is equally relevant at two different levels, of which only the more modest level can be readily understood. Certainly Magritte's initial concern is to reproduce objects, sites and living creatures which make up our everyday world in order to reconstitute its appearances for us with absolute fidelity. But far beyond this, Magritte is concerned to make us conscious of the latent life of all these components by drawing attention to the constant fluctuation of their interrelationships, and in this lies the total originality and capital importance of his intervention.

Where Masson plays games of chance with his audience, Magritte plays word games, with the explicit aim to "disturb our sense of reality" (Orban 1997: 120), to transform the real into the surreal. Magritte's aim is to create a moment of panic, where spectators feel trapped by the mystery of the image which refuses explanation. These panicked moments are what counted for Magritte; he called them "privileged moments" for they "transcend mediocrity" (Gablik 1976: 10).

Magritte's aim with paintings such as *La clef des songes* was to purposefully initiate the hypericonic event in imaginative participating spectators – to bewilder yet ultimately to act like the key through which spectators can enter into the distinct surreal world. To the Surrealists the dream state is as significant as the waking state, while the world inside the dream – the world of *surreality* – is even more 'real' than the real world.

Breton credits Sigmund Freud with the then newfound interest in dreaming (cf. Breton 2010: 10, Orban 1997: 88; Gauss 1981: 81, Krige, 1962: 11). Freud's highly influential work *Die Traumdeutung* (1899) [*The interpretation of dreams* (1913)], would prove of incalculable worth to Bretonian and Surrealist thought, with Nadeau (1965: 48) calling the time of dreaming "an unknown realm [that] devours nearly half [humankinds's] existence", and crediting Freud with seeking to illuminate this dark domain.[71] Freud's discoveries shocked the bourgeoisie but fascinated the Surrealists.

Freud's impact can clearly be seen in the way he related dreaming to imagining, writing: "During sleeping – the mental activity which may be described as 'imagination', liberated from the domination of reason and from any moderating control, leaps into a position of unlimited sovereignty" (Freud 1955: 84). Dreams, Freud says, reveal themselves as possessing not merely reproductive but productive abilities. Although they use recent memories as foundational building blocks, they construct events bearing not even a remote

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[71] Various versions of Freud's *The interpretation of dreams* are available online, at
http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/-Freud/Dreams/dreams.pdf,
https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/freud/sigmund/interpretation-of-dreams/, and
https://ia700502.us.archive.org/14/items/interpretationof1913freu/interpretationof1913freu.pdf.

likeness to waking life. Dream events are often highly peculiar; dreams show preferences for the excessive and unrestrained, the exaggerated and the monstrous or grotesque. Simultaneously, since dreaming is freed from the hindrances of the categories of thought, they gain pliancy, agility and versatility.

Dreaming was of such central importance to Surrealism because, as Breton (2010: 14) admits, the Surrealists believed in the future resolution of the two ostensibly incongruous states of reality and dream into a kind of "absolute reality, *a surreality*".[72]

Surrealist visual artists played numerous games: Masson's *dessins automatiques* is the motion of unconscious improvisational playing, Magritte plays with the arbitrary nature of words and images. These artists used Breton's ideas about the importance of play as triggers or springboards, developing their own games. A degree of arbitrariness, unpredictability and unintentionality is also found in play, and in a wide variety of Surrealist techniques, including collage, frottage, grattage, fummage, decalcomania, éclaboussure, and involuntary sculpture, objective chance and involuntary discovery play a key role.

Kendall Walton, in *Mimesis as make-believe: on the foundations of the representational arts* (1990), declares that make-believe is a "truly remarkable invention" and that "[o]bjectivity, control, the possibility of joint participation, spontaneity, all on top of a certain freedom from the cares of the real world: it looks as though make-believe has everything" (Walton 1990: 67-68).[73] Since all artists necessarily play, and the Surrealists placed a high value on playing in artistic creation, any number of their artworks can function as representative examples: Masson's *Les sirens* and Magritte's *La clef des songes* are both playful creations. However, I single out Max Ernst's *L'ange du foyer (Le triomphe du surréalisme)* (1937) (Figure 16) as particularly playful in a hypericonically surrealist vein.

Ernst depicts a monstrous angel against a very flat ground, with the horizon stretching far into the background. Dominating the painting is the gigantic, hideous-looking "Fireside angel" of the title. Against the sky blue of the background, Ernst's monster is quite colourful – his face and torso ranges from white, to red and yellow, and finally to blue, his arms are brown and green and red, his legs, blue and brown. Making the background of the painting

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[72] On the very first page of the *First Manifesto*, Breton (2010: 3) refers to man as "that inveterate dreamer". Breton maintained that time spent dreaming is equal to waking life, and it saddened him that we neglect dreams and dreaming, dismissing them as secondary. He went so far, in fact, as to call the waking state "a phenomenon of interference" (Breton 2010: 11-12).

[73] Playing any manner of games is an imaginative act – what is needed for a person, or an artist, is a kind of spontaneous and impulsive vigour, in other words playfulness (Seerveld 1987: 49). Play is universal, it is an activity we have all participated in; it is a fundamentally existential phenomenon – a spontaneous living impulse (Fink 1960: 96-105). Nachmanovitch (2009: 21-22) concludes: "[c]all it a difficult, joyful form in which by manipulating instruments, symbols, wave-forms or sound and light, body movement and sensation, we enact patterns that somehow encompass the entire experience and complexity of what it is to be alive".

so flat and the figure so colourful, contributes to making the angel stand out so spectacularly. The angel's face is weirdly contorted, its mouth is almost beaklike, with fangs instead of teeth, his hands end in claws, and from his right leg grows another pair of bizarre talon-like appendages, almost recalling the hideous apparitions in Ernst's *Der Versuchung des heilige Antonius* (Figure 10).

At first sight this so-called angel is quite terrifying, which is understandable since it is likely that Ernst intended it to be. According to Bunyan (2013), Ernst directly references a political incident, the Republican defeat during the Spanish Civil War. The angel, according to Bunyan, becomes an avenging angel, possessing a traumatising force against which humans are defenceless, with its destructive potential highlighted by Ernst's "almost violent" use of colour.

In contrast to Bunyan, I agree with Wingerd's (2011) view that: "Ernst portrays a vivid creature in a moment of joyous expression. Seemingly alive and grinning, the individual bursts with color, leading with a determined gape of his mouth and pleasant squint of his eyes, and showing no regard for how he may appear. [He] is horrifying yet ultimately fascinating". It is true that the figure is scary, but that is only at first glance. Looking beyond the frightfulness of his form, the figure's 'joyous expression' comes to the fore. I see him as dancing, waving his arms in the air, his left leg doing a gigue, while his right keeps rhythm. His colourful appearance is no longer ferocious but spirited and mischievous, and wonderfully playful.

In *L'ange du foyer* Ernst plays with the title of the work, colour, motion, and in effect with the painting's spectator engagement, setting the hypericonic event in motion. It is up to the spectator to decide whether to enter into the game being played, to exert the effort of playing along, even though he or she might be uncertain as to what kind of game is being played, and to realise that they are themselves being played as part of the painting's game. The spectator is played by the painting, even more so, as he or she becomes absorbed into the game. What kinds of games does *L'ange du foyer* play? The title refers to the hearth or fireside of a home, yet Ernst portrays his angel outside, which to me is the first indication of underlying nuances of surprise and ambiguous playfulness in the work. The colourful palette Ernst uses shows the artist playing with his medium, and instead of making the angel appear aggressive, rather he seems vibrant, animated and full of character. The angel seems to be dancing. He seems animated and lively, with dancing as a form of play. Furthermore, to make a static depiction on a canvas seem to be in motion is testament to Ernst's playing with the process of image portrayal.

Playing games was particularly important to the collective Surrealist activity, far more so than for any other avant-garde movement dynamic (Fijalkowski 2005: 3-5). They played all

manner of games while writing their collective poetry, including the game of folded paper, the game of questions and answers, *cadavres exquis*, and the game of truth or consequences (Nadeau 1965: 224). The interplay of serious enquiry and imaginative freedom was a cornerstone of Surrealist play.

A contemporary of the Surrealists, who had a reciprocal relationship with them, who also wrote about playing, is the French sociologist and philosopher, Roger Caillois.[74] He developed a classification system for the myriad different play-types, distinguishing four primary types, which depend upon whether competition, luck or chance, imitation, or vertigo governs the game – alternatively *agôn, alea, mimicry* and *ilinx* (Caillois 1961: 12). Magritte with his inexplicable word-games is, perhaps, playing *agôn* games with spectators, whereas Masson's vertiginous chance games recall the *alea,* and *ilinx* play-types.

Automatism, chance, dreams, play are, clearly interrelated, actions and activities of the imagination, often functioning subconsciously. In fact, it was the Surrealist's particular aim to exploit exactly this, to tap into the unconscious and subconscious, so as to arrive at the surreal.

3.5   Alchemy: a surrealist metaphor

Breton, in the *Second Manifesto*, equates the motivations and aims of the Surrealists with the fourteenth century alchemists.[75] According to Breton (2010: 174-75) the quest for the philosopher's stone enables and liberates the imagination, a goal shared by the members of Surrealism.[76] Moreover, similar to alchemy's purpose, to transform lead into gold, the Surrealists sought to transform bourgeois society. They strove to effect changes in the real, lived, physical world, to not merely be an isolated artistic endeavour, to become a "means

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[74] Caillois was friends with Breton until they parted ways in 1934, when Breton accused Caillois of being an empiricist and positivist. In 1937, Caillois became a founding member, alongside Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, of the *Collège de Sociologie* in Paris, dedicated to exploring the nature of the sacred in society. Some two years later, Caillois published the important study *L'Homme et le sacré* (1939) (Warner 2008).

[75] James Elkins wrote *What painting is: how to think about oil painting, using the language of alchemy* (1999), wherein he compares painting to alchemy. Both use similar ingredients (from the understandable such as linseed to the bizarre such as animal skins and exotic plants), to create – either a painting or the Philosopher's Stone. Elkins (1999: 2) believes there is a similarity "that runs even deeper"; in alchemy there are spiritual or meditative alchemists who read about and contemplate alchemy without going near a laboratory. He equates critics and art historians to these alchemists, since they "rarely venture close enough to a studio to feel the pull of paint on their fingers". Szulakowska (2011: 5-6) is very critical of Elkins' book, since he regards alchemy as "an unimportant irrelevance to the artistic experimentation of the twentieth century". Nevertheless, she does credit him for suggesting that alchemy might provide an analogy to explain the specific process of painting in oils.

[76] Breton's initial interest in alchemy, tarot and other aspects of the occult manifested in his novel *Nadja* (1934) (Tuchman 1986: 49). Breton also wrote a monograph, *L'art Magique* (1957), as a statement regarding the historical relationship between art and magic (Szulakowska 2011: 38).

of transmutation" (Grant 2005: 254). Breton also references the "alchemy of the word" (Breton 2010: 173), in relation to automatism, since automatism too requires a spiritual state of mind (Tuchman 1986: 49).

Significantly, besides stating the importance of the alchemists to the workings of the Surrealists, Breton compares their efforts to those of alchemists such as Nicolas Flamel (ca 1330-1418), whose discovery of the fourteenth century manuscript *Abraham the Jew* inspired him to begin his alchemical quest (Grant 2005: 254; Szulakowska 2011: 35). Flamel's alchemical imagery became foundational for Breton's notion of the creative unconscious.[77] Besides Flamel, Breton also had other sources that led him to alchemy. He found similarities between the Surrealists' experiments and the esoteric teachings of Cornelius Agrippa, to whom Breton refers as "the great arch-sorcerer himself" (Breton 2002: 159).[78] Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia libri tres* (Cologne, 1533) proved particularly insightful.

Breton appropriated ideas from the Decadents and Charles Baudelaire, who themselves adopted notions from the ex-priest Éliphas Lévi (1810-75) (pseudonym of Abbé Adophe-Louis Constant), the great innovator of the occult in nineteenth century France and an important propagator of alchemical and cabbalistic ideas, as well as Joséphin Péladan (1858-1918) one of the few occult writers who was consistently engaged in the arena of art (Imanse 1986: 356-358).[79]

Breton also found inspiration in the uncanny and disturbing narratives of Arthur Rimbaud and in the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. The poets Mallarmé and Max Jacob were deeply committed followers of Lévi, while Jacob's alchemical interests made a strong impression on Georges Braque, Juan Gris, and Pablo Picasso, and consequently ensured the adoption of the alchemical corpus by Breton and the Surrealist group.

An intriguing visual depiction of the performance of alchemical rituals is found in Leonora Carrington's *The house opposite* (1945) (Figure 17). Carrington's "feminist alchemy" has its origins in a mental breakdown she suffered in 1940 (Szulakowska 2011: 99). Held in an asylum in Santander, Spain, she was injected with the medication cardiazol. While under its influence, Carrington experienced a vision of herself as the Universal Alchemist, a supreme

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[77] The original Flamel made his wealth working as an advocate and scrivener to the Jewish community in Paris. Legend tells that he discovered a book of copper, illustrated with emblems of a violent nature, the book of Abraham the Jew. He journeyed to Spain where a member of the Sephardic Jewish community explained the significance of the book to him. According to the myth, on his return to Paris, with the help of his wife, Péronelle, he successfully made a Philosopher's Stone (Szulakowska 2011: 35).

[78] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535)

[79] Lévi's most influential publications include *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie* (1856), its sequel *Histoire de la magie* (1860), and *La Clef des grandes mystères* (1861).

deity in a specifically female form who had the power to transmute the chaos created by the male trinitarian god into spiritual gold.

In this painting, the customary site of female domestic labour is transformed into a site of occult drama (Aberth 1992: 84). Numerous hybrid women – half-woman, half-plant, half-animal – perform various alchemical, spiritualistic, shamanistic rituals and rites. Carrington depicts four rooms in a house, the eponymous *The house opposite*. A woman with a flowing red coat and what seems like a head and face of branches enters the main space from the left. Seated at a table is a strange looking woman, her face and the shadow she casts reminiscent of a seahorse. From above her, entering the downstairs room through a hole in the ceiling, is the spirit of a younger girl. In the left upstairs room are two more women, also hybrid in appearance. Connecting the two upstairs rooms is an underwater, forest scene. The right upstairs room features an empty bed and an insect-woman climbing the stairs.

In the remaining room, the bottom right, an alchemistic ritual takes place. Three women stand around an alchemical cauldron, stirring the contents. The most bizarre looking woman once again has a fish-like face, while the woman stirring the pot wears a coat decorated with stars. Finally, a woman wearing a black mantle climbs up stairs from this room to the one above. The entire scene has an atmosphere of the supernatural and mysterious – the house presents a sacred space, where organic creatures dance and float weightlessly, transcending physical boundaries as they perform their magical rituals.

A possible allusion to a world-upside-down, evoked by the title of the painting, is the inversion of the customary way of reading from left to right, and up and down. This alchemical scene, at the bottom right, is the central event in the house – it is from this scene that the rest of the house is populated, and where the painting's hypericonic event is also elicited.

Carrington does not use the image of the alchemical laboratory directly. Instead she incorporates its workings into the female world of kitchens and cauldrons (Stent 2011: 151), inhabiting her scene with what Szulakowska (2011: 95-96) calls alchemical tree-spirits, although to me they seem more like underwater creatures. She creates a microcosmic universe, where the histories and spiritual lives of women are passed down from mother to daughter, in a world "mirroring that of the patriarchy" (Szulakowska 2011: 96). In this alternative universe the rites and rituals the women perform consist of daily trifles and trivialities, but these are the alchemical prime matter whose proper manipulation will ensure the spiritual and material regeneration of the world.

Carrington's 'feminist alchemy' is markedly different from the male members of Surrealism.[80] Where the men wanted to transform bourgeois society, Carrington's purpose was to "empower women", in this instance transforming a kitchen into an alchemical domain (Szulakowska 2011: 93). Because Carrington's aim with *The house opposite* was to empower women, it affects its hypericonic shock in a unique manner. *The house opposite* does not play games of chance with spectators, and although the depicted scene could be dream derived, it does not jolt in the same manner as Magritte's dream images, which play with spectator expectations.

Rather, Carrington, who associates alchemy – which is also the quest for immortality, and eternal life – with women, who create and give life; Carrington fictionalises and fantasises as she rewrites the importance of the roles of women. She emboldens, invigorates, strengthens, and revitalises women, hoping to invert and subvert the subordinate position society, and the male members of Surrealism, attribute to women, hence also the title of *The house opposite*.

This example by a woman artist perhaps also sheds light on another facet of the hypericonic dynamic, which will occur again in the following chapter focusing specifically on women artists, namely that images can have different affective powers on men and women. The male members of Surrealism, and the male contingent of bourgeois society, might have been surprised that a woman would not only deem herself an artist, but would moreover appropriate alchemical imagery, which she then uses to empower women – the affective power of this painting on a female spectator.

3.6   Appropriating so-called primitivism

By the time Goldwater wrote his ground-breaking work *Primitivism in modern art*, first published in 1938, 'primitive art' had become synonymous with objects from Africa, Native America, and Oceania in colonialist ethnographic collections.[81] Often inspiration drawn from outside Europe was used as a disruptive and subversive strategy to undermine the conventions and traditions of Western society (cf. Holden 1991: 52; Lloyd 1993: 92;

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[80] Women have a long and serious involvement with alchemy. Between the first and third centuries AD, for example, alchemical treatises were attributed to Maria Prophetissa (the sister of Moses) and Cleopatra, who could have been a real alchemist since there were many rulers of that name in late antiquity (Szulakowska 2011: 3).

[81] It is extremely difficult to determine an exact definition of the word 'primitivism', since the meaning of the word changed considerably during the first decades of the twentieth century (cf. Goldwater 1986: xxiii; Rubin 1994: 2-3; Birtwistle 1996: 2; Flam & Deutch 2003: xiii). During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, 'primitive art' referred to the art of Flemish artists, and was later expanded to include Romanesque and Byzantine art, as well as non-Western art ranging from Peru, Egypt, and Java (Rubin 1994: 2). The term did not, at this stage, refer to the arts of Africa or Oceania. By the time artists such as Matisse, Derain, and Picasso 'discovered' African and Oceanic masks, around 1906-07, "primitive art" became increasingly associated with tribal objects – with Rubin calling this a "strictly modernist interpretation" of the term.

Birtwistle 1996: 2, 5; Flam 2003: 4, 11).[82] The Surrealists embraced 'primitive art' exactly because it challenged the *status quo* – Rubin (1994: 6) calls it "a countercultural battering ram". As such, 'primitivism' offered a unique form of pictorial inventiveness and imaginative artistic creation (Flam 2003: 1, 3), aiding modern artists to see different artistic solutions, since "it comprised a body of work from outside the shared realm of artistic consciousness, from beyond the collective imagination as they knew it" (Holden 1991: 65).

Surrealists had ample opportunities to view the arts of diverse folk and tribal cultures, historic and prehistoric, European and non-European (Holden 1991: 55-56).[83] During the 1920s in Paris, collections of ethnographic art were readily available, with permanent collections on display in museums, such as the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, and in contemporary galleries, and in curio shops where African objects were often for sale.

The first exhibition of Surrealist painting in 1925, *La pienture Surréaliste*, at the Galerie Pierre in Paris, was accompanied by a collection of tribal sculptures (Holden 1991: 58; Maurer 1994: 546).[84] Clearly, from the start, the Surrealists felt a keen sense of identification with Latin American and in particular Oceanic art. This conscious association was moreover continued in the first exhibition of Surrealist objects held at the Galerie Ratton in 1936 (Holden 1991: 59-60).[85] At a later exhibition at the London Gallery in 1937, *Surrealist Objects and Poems*, Herbert Read defined the object in the catalogue foreword in terms of primitivism.

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[82] Just how much twentieth century Western art engaged with and appropriated from primitive art objects is difficult to determine. Goldwater (1986: xxi), finds an "extreme scarcity of the direct influence of primitive forms", and that there is "very little that is not allusion and suggestion rather than immediate borrowing". Conversely, Rubin (1994: 17) maintains that Goldwater took too conservative a view and that he substantially underestimates the role primitive art played.

[83] A number of publications were also available, including the art dealers and collectors Carl Einstein (1885-1940) whose *Negerplastik* (1915) appeared in a French translation as *La sculpture Africaine* (1922), and Paul Guillaume (1891-1934) who curated the *Première Exposition d'Art Nègre et d'Art Océanien* in May 1919 and together with Apollinaire published the study *Sculptures Nègres* (1917). In addition, Éluard, Breton, and Ernst themselves assembled private collections of African and Oceanic art (Maurer 1994: 546, 552).

[84] In 1984, Rubin and Varnedoe co-curated an exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York titled "*Primitivism" in 20th century art: affinity of the tribal and the modern*: "to understand the Primitive sculptures in terms of Western context in which modern artists 'discovered' them" (Rubin 1994: 1). Numerous authors have criticised the exhibition, and its eponymous accompanying publication, for employing too narrow a definition of primitivism (Birtwistle 1996: 3), and for "actively constituting in its poetics a hegemonic ideological structure" (Myers 2006: 270). Foster (1985) and Clifford (1988) were particularly scathing in their critiques, although Clifford does admit that despite the narrow focus of the show, the accompanying catalogue does encourage debate (Clifford 1988: 190). Lastly, Clifford (1987) and more recently, Farago (2009) have also criticised the disciplines of anthropology, ethnology, and even art history, for reiterating the "relations of power that its critical reemployments attempt to dismantle" (Farago 2009: 212).

[85] Not only had Charles Ratton had a long association with the Surrealists, he was also an expert and dealer in tribal art. In the exhibition in his gallery, the installation was made to resemble the exhibits in a museum of ethnology, and the catalogue listed categories of objects in a manner similar to an ethnological guide. The objects included in the exhibition comprised Surrealist readymades and assisted readymades, natural objects, and found objects, as well as American and Oceanic objects including masks, fetishes, and sculptural objects – all exhibited under the overall banner of Surrealist Objects (Holden 1991: 59).

A visual example which illustrates the Surrealist orientation of the Western world is Figure 18's *Surrealist map of the world* (1929). In the map "all the developed countries are depicted diminished in scale and importance, while what is currently known as the third world forms the central part of the map" (Rabinovitch 2004: 114). Hence, North America virtually disappears – only Alaska and the Labrador region of Canada are featured – and is replaced by Mexico, while the Pacific Ocean is elevated to the centre of the world. Europe is dwarfed by Russia, while Africa is also shown to play only a small role. The Surrealists were considerably more interested in the arts from Oceania, as well as Native American art, than they were in art from Africa (Rubin 1994: 41, Flam 2003: 14). This map is not only a literal elevation or inversion of the usual hierarchy of the 'primitive', it also reveals the Surrealists acknowledgement of non-Western cultures.

While the Surrealist's were devoted to so-called primitive objects, their appreciation did not encompass its formal qualities, but was rather subjective and self-reflecting (Holden 1991: 45-47). They read into 'primitive art' what they sought in Surrealism and in embodiments of Surrealist ideas – seeking out the new and unorthodox. Hence, as Holden (1991: 50) and Goldwater (1986: 222) conclude, relatively few Surrealist works were directly inspired by 'primitive art' or influenced in a specific or identifiable manner.[86]

Since no instances of direct influence of 'primitive art' on members of the French movement have as yet been conclusively established, and the geographical configurations in the *Surrealist map of world* suggest that their interests in the 'primitive' are located in Mexico and the Pacific South Seas, rather than in Africa, my reason for including 'primitive art' is for its significance in the following chapters of this study. In both the Mexican and South African settings, investigated in the next two chapters, I observe that artists employ the juxtapositioning of Western motifs with the imagery of indigenous cultures when creating their own varieties and brands of surrealist 'poetic images'. Frida Kahlo in particular, in the Mexican context, appropriates Mesoamerican and Aztec motifs, whereas in the South African setting Alexis Preller and Cyril Coetzee fuse distinctly South African and European imagery. Preller held a particular fascination for the Mapogga culture of the Ndebele people, which he employs repeatedly, whereas Coetzee, in *T'Kama Adamastor* (Figure 26) engages with myths about the indigenous Khoisan people.

In conclusion, I have shown that the Surrealists had a radicalised notion of imagining, revealing itself to be rebellious, subversive, non-traditional, and unconventional. I indicated that the members of Surrealism believed the imagination, if utilised in a radical surrealist manner, could bring about socio-political and artistic revolution. The 'surrealist poetic

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[86] Holden (1991) investigated the relationship between Surrealism and African art, in particular examining any connection between Surrealist and West African sculpture. She limited her study to West Africa, investigating the 'influence' Nigerian sculpture had on the work of Alberto Giacometti, Max Ernst, and Jean Arp.

image' created through the juxtapositioning of incongruous worlds, emphasises the human productive imagining faculty. Surrealist 'poetic images' let the imagination take flight, intending its creations to confound reason and logic, and to penetrate beyond the real to reveal surreality.

The expansive Surrealist interest in a radicalised imagination is reflected in their unique imaging and imagining actions expressed in characteristic concepts including automatism, which aims to tap into an artist's subconscious, the artist only functioning as a passive recorder. The Surrealists utilised dreams and dreaming to cause moments of bewilderment, whereas they employed play and chance as a means of artistic creation to cause shock and surprise. These actions and activities of imagining, foregrounded in Surrealist philosophy, emphasise the unaware, unconscious, and subconscious workings of human imagining.

The important, although often subconscious and involuntary, functioning of the imagination in everyday aesthetic experience has often been neglected by artists and philosophers alike (Saito 2010: 9). The imagination's crucial supportive and unconscious workings, frequently unacknowledged or disparaged, becomes emphasised in Surrealist practice – they give prominence to imagination, with the express aim of awakening and enlivening its essential role as the source of human freedom. I maintain Surrealism's legacy is found not just in the enduring use of the term 'surrealist' in critical discourse, but rather the movement's lasting emphasis on the importance of the imagination, both as regards engaged spectator cooperation and collaboration, and, significantly, in everyday human life.

Figure 12. Max Ernst, *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1942)

Figure 13. René Magritte, *La Clairvoyance* (1936)
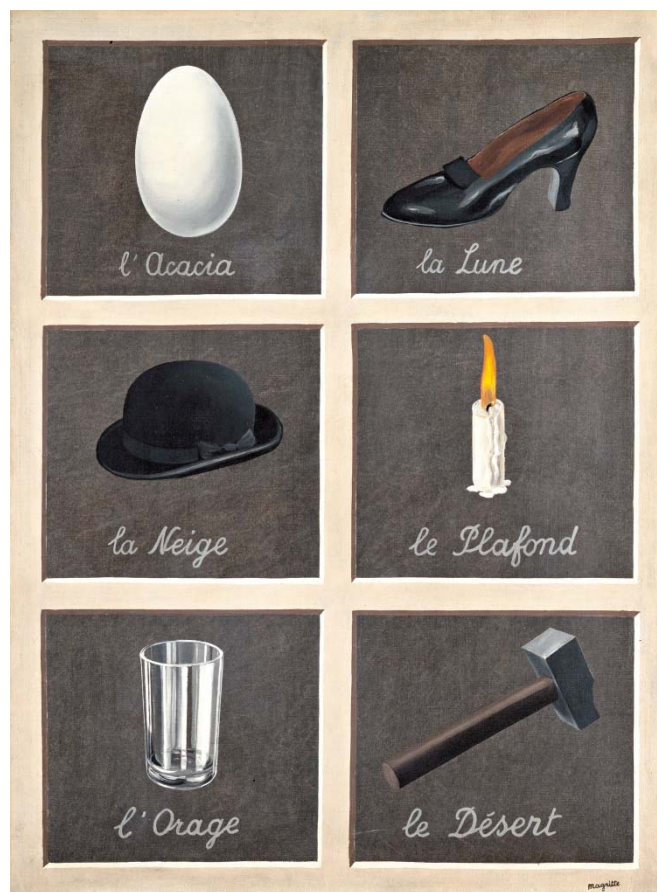
Figure 14. André Masson, *Les sirenes* (1947)

Figure 15. René Magritte, *La clef des songes* (1930)

Figure 16. Max Ernst, *L'ange du foyer (Le triomphe du surréalisme)* (1937)

Figure 17. Leonora Carrington, *The house opposite* (1945)

Figure 18. Anonymous, *Surrealist map of the world* (1929)

Chapter 4: On the edge of Surrealism: a Latin American cluster of women artists

I have identified a cluster of women artists, living and working in Latin-America after the outbreak of the Second World War, who I propose can be situated in the wake of Surrealism. Although some forty-seven women can be grouped together in this cluster, I focus my inquiry on Frida Kahlo (born Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderón) (1907-1954), Remedios Varo (born María de los Remedios Alicia Rodriga Varo y Uranga) (1908-1963), and Leonora Carrington (1917-2011).

I single out these three women since they had well-known direct ties to members of the movement in Paris. Breton lived in Frida Kahlo's house during his 1938 visit to Mexico. Remedios Varo met and married the Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret while living in Cataluna, Spain, in 1936. They settled in Paris, but had to flee from German-occupied France in 1942, relocating to Mexico, where Varo remained for the rest of her life (Zamora 1992: 115). Leonora Carrington met Max Ernst in London, beginning an affair with him in 1937 (Weisz 2013). She returned with him to Paris, but in 1941, Ernst was imprisoned, deemed a 'hostile alien'. Carrington escaped to Spain where she found refuge in the Mexican embassy, and fleeing Europe, she ultimately established herself in Mexico in 1942 (Aberth 1992: 83).

Other women who belong to this group, who also had acknowledged relationships with various members of the French movement include Kay Sage (1898-1963), Maruja Mallo (1902-95), Leonor Fini (1907-1996), Helen Lundberg (1908-1999), Bridget Bate Tichenor (1917-90), and Sylvia Fein (1919), to name only a few. I have selected Kahlo, Varo, and Carrington, however, for the striking hypericonic dynamics at work in their 'poetic images'.

Similarly to Diego Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* (Figure 1), with its strange fusion of colonial-Spanish and folk-Mexican cultures, which has the affective image power to unsettle or perturb spectators as it plays with the processes of image creation, key artworks by Kahlo in particular, and Varo and Carrington as well reveal such 'cultural entanglements' – bizarre fusions and clashes of western-colonial and indigenous-Mesoamerican cultures. Rather than the explicit or 'direct' use of automatism and chance as subconsciously guided procedures of image creation, these women's playfully incongruent juxtapositionings, cosmic dream imaginings and fantastical reveries also prompt startling jolts for imaginatively engaged spectators, inciting the hypericonic dynamic.

I situate the cluster of women broadly-speaking 'in the wake of Surrealism' since they are, firstly, separated geographically from the French movement proper, and secondly, because they produced their most significant artworks after the outbreak of the Second World War– in other words, after Surrealism's decline. Most women who were attracted to the

movement, either through their personal relationships with male members or due to its radical, anti-conventionalist stance, in the end had to assert their independence from Surrealism. Most, like Varo and Carrington, were just embarking on their artistic careers when they came to Paris, and many would do their mature work only after leaving the Surrealist circle, like Varo and Carrington who only came into artistic maturity in Mexico (Chadwick 1996: 310).

I would, nevertheless, situate the group more specifically, 'on the edge of Surrealism', or to quote Lyons (2012: 3), "on the fringes of the movement". There are two reasons why I make this distinction. Firstly, these women had direct connections with the French movement before it began to experience its decline, and they are not yet so far removed from the movement, temporally, that they can fully be situated in its wake.

Secondly, in Latin America one also finds the undeniable influence of 'Magical realism', an artistic and literary movement which, on the surface at least, recalls Surrealism.[87] The two movements overlap since they have similar definitions: Bowers (2004: 1) refers to Magical realism as the "relationship of irreconcilable terms" and its "inherent inclusion of contradictory elements". Franz Roh, who coined the term in 1925, considered magical realism to be related to, but distinctive from Surrealism: Magical realism focusses on material objects and the actual existence of things in the world, as opposed to Surrealism's psychoanalytic approach to the unconscious and dreams (Bowers 2004: 10).[88]

Alejo Carpentier, cited in Bowers (2004: 13) as being responsible for introducing magical realism to Latin America, describes the difference as follows: "improbable juxtapositions and marvellous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics—not by manifesto". From this sentence one can already draw the conclusion that there must be some tone or quality in Mexico and Latin-American countries that lends itself to Surrealism. However, this distinctive atmosphere is not prescribed, stipulated, fixed, or defined, which is also why I rather situate the artists working in Mexico

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[87] Much of the confusion between Surrealism and Magical realism arises from the fact that the French movement and the style are contemporaneous, and there are obvious similarities between the two as is evidenced by their respective definitions (Bowers 2004: 11). The most distinct difference between them, however, is that Magical realism does not explore the mind and imagination as does Surrealism. In comparison, the extraordinary in Magical realism is rarely presented in the form of a dream or a psychological experience because to do so would place magic in the little understood world of the imagination. The ordinariness of Magical realism's magic relies on its accepted and unquestioned position in tangible and material reality. Moreover, Surrealism as a movement lasted from approximately 1924-1942, and was clearly defined through its manifestoes, whereas magical realism has been discussed and nuanced by many critics and writers but has never been ultimately defined in this way (Bowers 2004: 22-23). Also cf. Hough (1982).

[88] Franz Roh introduced the term to refer to a new form of post-expressionist painting during the Weimar Republic, coining the term in the 1925 publication *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neusten europäischen Malerei* (Bowers 2004: 8).

on the edge of Surrealism.[89] Furthermore, Carpentier's 'not by manifesto' indicates that he has vivid everyday imaginative experiences rather than artistic movements in mind. Perhaps one could even argue that in some instances of Magical realism the unsettling co-presence of disjunct realities may appear to overlap with surrealism, but its brand of hypericonic dynamics is not rooted in experiences below the consciousness threshold.

Although it is undeniable that Latin-America provided its own unique influences, such as magical realism, a certain surrealist timbre or resonance is also undeniable in the oeuvres of Kahlo, Varo, and Carrington. Their art is original and unique, yet also subversive, rebellious, anti-traditional, and anti-conventional. Their respective oeuvres reveal elements of dreams, play, alchemy, primitivism, the supernatural, magical, mythical, and marvellous. Moreover, these elements are merged in sometimes random and arbitrary, sometimes contradictory and incongruous ways, in 'poetic images' which are strange and fantastical. These enigmatic depictions also initiate the affective powers of their images.

4.1 Women and Surrealism

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) held an exhibition entitled *In Wonderland: the Surrealist adventures of women artists in Mexico and the United States,* from January 29 to May 6, 2012.[90] That this exhibition was held as recently as 2012 suggests lively interest in female surrealist art. The investigation of the work of women surrealists in particular is very relevant and necessary, especially since such an exploration had never been undertaken before.

The exhibition, co-organised by LACMA and the Museo de Arte Moderno (MAM) in Mexico, was the first comprehensive, international survey of women surrealists in North America (LACMA 2012). While previous surveys of the movement had either largely excluded or minimised the contributions of women surrealists, this ground-breaking exhibition highlighted the significant contribution made by women surrealists active in these two countries. Works included in the retrospective span from the 1930s to the 1970s and featured approximately 175 works by forty-seven artists, including Kahlo, Varo, and Carrington.[91]

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[89] Debate surrounding the influence of Surrealism and magical realism on the arts in Mexico is still ongoing. The 2016 College Art Association (CAA) Annual Conference to be held in Washington, D.C., includes a session devoted to "Tragic(al) Realism: contemporary afterlives of Magical (Sur)realism".

[90] The choice of title for the exhibition is noteworthy, since the 'wonderland' of Lewis Carroll's famous narrative evokes the "topsy-turvy, inverted logic" (Johnson 2012) of the picaresque worldview framing. By linking Mexico with 'wonderland' it seems as though these women found in Mexico somewhere where they felt empowered to explore their own dreams, fantasies, and imaginings away from the all-male art establishment of New York, Paris and other artistic capitals in Europe.

[91] The wide interest generated by this exhibition is reflected in reviews which can be found online at:

Not surprisingly, in reviews of the exhibition both Knight (2012) and Johnson (2012) comment on the fact that the *In Wonderland* exhibition hosted only women artists. Caws (1991: 9) categorises the relationship between women and Surrealism as "problematic", mirrored in the fact that no women ever undersigned any of the official Surrealist manifestoes: "only the men had official power within the movement" (Lyons 2012: 3). According to Haynes (1995: 26-27), Surrealism had a "gendered agenda". Male artists, including René Magritte, Hans Bellmer, Man Ray, Salvador Dalí, and Max Ernst based their images on traditional patriarchal and misogynist attitudes toward women. It was up to female surrealists to develop strategies through which they could subtly subvert traditional gender models.

The male members of the movement's attitude towards women may be another reason to situate these female artists on the periphery, or edge, of Surrealism. The men, Breton included, typecast women as mistress, wife, muse, goddess, *femme-enfant*, *femme-aimée*, or *femme-fatale,* but never as fellow artist (Kaplan 1981: 17; Urton 2005). Although put on a pedestal as a figure of central importance, women were nevertheless relegated to the status of object – of desire, of inspiration, of fear, of devotion. Such status was ultimately limiting, not offering women claim to an independent identity. It is 'woman' as defined in man's terms, defined as Other instead of Self (Stent 2011: 139).[92]

Also complicating the problematic relationship of women with Surrealism was the fact that quite a number of these women, Varo and Carrington included, came to Surrealism through their relationships with male members of the movement, rather than their own initial interest in Surrealist philosophy, *per se*. As a result, they felt free to explore other interests

Anon. 2012. LACMA's "In Wonderland" is dazzling survey of female surrealists. *The Huffington Post*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/03/lacmas-in-wonderland_n_1253657.html. [Accessed 6 May 2015].

Anon. 2012. LACMA's "In Wonderland" transports viewers to surrealist places. *The Madeleine Brand Show*. http://www.scpr.org/programs/madeleine-brand/2012/01/30/22306/meet-the-female-surrealists/. [Accessed 6 May 2015].

Brinkworth, D. 2012. Frida Kahlo along with other female Surrealists on display in LA. *Haute Living*. http://hauteliving.com/2012/01/frida-kahlo-along-with-other-female-surrealists-on-display-in-la/245560/. [Accessed 6 May 2015].

Cheney, A. 2012. Five decades of feminine (and funny) Surrealism. *The Wall Street Journal*. http://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970203718504577182822490516702?mg=reno64wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424052970203718504577182824905167‌02.html. [Accessed 6 May 2015].

Painter, A.G. 2012. Surrealism, women, and new frontiers: "In Wonderland" celebrates top artists in Mexico and US. *NBC Los Angeles*. http://www.nbclosangeles.com/the-scene/events/Surrealism-Women-and-New-Frontiers-138288484.html. [Accessed 6 May 2015].

Serrano, N.L. 2012. LACMA's gambit: In Wonderland's Surrealist women. *X-tra*. http://x-traonline.org/article/lacmas-gambit-in-wonderlands-surrealist-women/. [Accessed 6 May 2015].

[92] Stent (2011: 8) even wonders if the male members of the movement did not feel threatened by the presence of women artists in their midst, worrying that they might eventually achieve greater self-sufficiency, autonomy and even fame.

(which were nevertheless often still related to Surrealism) (Chadwick 1996: 310-11). Since women were always on the outside, on the edge, of the inner Surrealist circle they were at liberty to develop their "own brand of Surrealism" (Stent 2011: 5), challenging masculine conceptions of art and femininity. They appropriated the foundations and original traits of Surrealism, yet they were free to rebel against the patriarchal nature of the movement (Stent 2011: 19-20).[93]

Mexico in particular provided a landscape removed from male-dominated Europe, and somewhere for the women artists to explore their own interests, which included femininity and the feminine, dreams and play, indigenous-primitivism, and alchemy, the supernatural, spiritual, occult, and mythical. Mexico is a country filled with a unique wonder, with a mysticism influenced by pre-Columbian and Catholic cultures, and steeped in indigenous imagery and myths, a place of fertile imaginary creation (Knight 2012).

French Surrealism entered Latin America through Mexico: Artaud visited Mexico in 1936, Breton in 1938. For all his efforts "to take Surrealism to Mexico", when he arrived there Breton found Mexico was already surrealist. As Butler & Donaldson (2013: 1-2) write: "Mexico was surrealist before Surrealism", whereas Zamora (1992: 115) refers to Breton calling Mexico "naturally surrealist".[94] As I have already suggested above, with reference to Alejo Carpentier's citation concerning magical realism, the setting in Mexico provides startling juxtapositions and marvellous combinations which exist historically, culturally, socially, and politically. Mexico, in other words, is rife with elements for artists with surrealist sensibilities to discover and explore; as Zamora (1992: 116) writes:

> [...] in Mexico the tenets of Surrealism were not products of an intellectual movement but reflections of popular attitudes and beliefs, not a radical break from the past but a continuous, living tradition. Mexico's rich and often unexpected mixture of indigenous and Christian mythologies and iconographies, its visible continuity of ancient and modern cultural forms, its implicit cultural valorization of mystery and drama over empiricism and discursive logic, its own particular ratios and relations of public and private, political and psychological – these were not lost upon European émigrés seeking access to irrational modes of mind and matter. Nor were they lost upon artists seeking the visual means to express their discoveries.

While their male counterparts in Europe were focusing on Freudian dream analysis, and the exploration of the unconscious through automatism, Kahlo, Varo, Carrington and the other

[93] In their paintings of the female body, conceived not as Other but as Self, they anticipate a feminine poetics of the body – imaging and celebrating the female body's organic, erotic, and maternal reality – that would fully emerge only with the Feminist movement of the 1970s (Chadwick 1996: 310-13).
[94] Breton's engagement with Surrealism in Mexico found its ultimate expression in the *International Surrealism Exhibition*, held in Mexico City in 1940 (Zamora 1992: 115).

women in the Latin-American cluster were free to tap into their unconscious "through indigenous shamanism, Jungian mythic archetypes and esoteric and occult practices, from the kabbalah and Tarot to Haitian voodoo" (Johnson 2012). Where male Surrealists often portrayed women as muses or objects of desire, the women portrayed themselves as complex, multifaceted and multidimensional beings sometimes represented by animal avatars like those found in the oeuvre of Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo, or by other powerful alchemistic figures, as in the paintings of Leonora Carrington.

4.2   Frida Kahlo: an unwilling Surrealist

Frida Kahlo is the odd one out among these three women, since she was the only one originally from Mexico and, in contrast to the European women surrealists striving and struggling to be recognised by their male counterparts, Kahlo was labelled a Surrealist by Breton despite her assertions to the contrary. Breton was quite taken with Kahlo's art, writing that he had "long admired the self-portrait of Frida Kahlo de Rivera that hangs on a wall of Trotsky's study" (Breton 2002: 143-44). Breton believed that her contribution to the art of the early twentieth century was to be extraordinary. He was surprised when he discovered that "her work has blossomed forth, in her latest paintings, into pure surreality", without her having any prior knowledge of the existence of the movement. That Breton was 'surprised' reveals just how patronising and condescending his attitude toward women artists was.

That Breton was so willing and quick to appropriate Kahlo's art for the French movement yet again points toward male domination of the female – a likely reason why Kahlo rejected the label, stating: "there is no doubt that in many respects my painting is related to that of the Surrealists, but it was never my intention to produce a work that would fit into that category" (Stent: 2011: 182). Another likely reason why Kahlo denied the Surrealist classification, related to the first, is that her work was initially overshadowed by her marriage to Diego Rivera, and she was therefore determined to create work based on her own terms, independently of any man, whether he was her husband or not (Stent 2011: 183).

I observe in Kahlo's work the most distinct collision and synthesis of primitivist-indigenous and European-colonial cultures, stemming from her revolutionary interest in Mexican politics. Her oeuvre represents the meeting between Mesoamerica and Roman-Catholicism. Kahlo's 'primitivism' became absorbed into the powerfully complex undertaking of indigenism or nativism – a tremendously complicated phenomenon in Mexico, and the driving force behind Mexico's cultural revolution (Brett 1993: 127-28). Kahlo revealed a decidedly intense interest in her homeland, reflected in her use of indigenous Aztec imagery (Helland 1990: 12).

Kahlo's commitment to Mexico and its people cannot be understated (Helland 1990: 8). As she sought her own roots, she also voiced her concern for Mexico as it struggled to form an independent cultural identity. Kahlo's particular form of *Mexicanidad* revered Aztec traditions above and beyond those of other pre-Spanish native cultures.[95] She expressed her deeply felt ethnic nationalism in art by favouring the representation of the powerful and authoritarian pre-Columbian society that had united a large area of the Middle Americas. This emphasis on the Aztec, rather than Mayan or other indigenous cultures, corresponds to her political demand for a unified, and independent nation-state of Mexico.

In Mexico, nativism, defined as a conscious effort on the part of members of a society to revive parts of its own culture, implied not only national resurgence but also the rediscovery of indigenous cultural values (Brett 1993: 127). Hence, in the Mexican setting, political revolution – a central tenet in the development of Surrealism – goes hand in hand with folklorist-primitivist interests.

Two metapictorial paintings, strongly imbued with a personal iconography from Kahlo's Mesoamerican ethnic heritage, whose affective imagery has hypericonic ramifications for imaginatively participating beholders, are *Lo que el agua me ha dado*, or *What the water gave me* (1938) (Figure 19), and *El abrazo de amor de el universo, la tierra (México), yo, Diego y el señor Xólotl* [*The loving embrace of the universe, the earth (Mexico), myself, Diego and señor Xólotl*] (1949) (Figure 20).[96]

In his essay on Kahlo, Breton refers to the 1938 painting *Lo que el agua me ha dado*, which she had finished while he was still in Mexico, writing the following:

> The power of inspiration here is nourished by the strange ecstasies of
> puberty and the mysteries of generation, and, far from considering these to
> be the mind's private preserves, as in some colder climates, she displays
> them proudly with a mixture of candour and insolence (Breton 2002: 144).

Brett (1993: 128) reiterates Breton's observation, writing that although she had a tremendous enthusiasm for indigenous Mexican culture, her works were also influenced by the cultic style of popular *retablo* or *ex voto* paintings in the Latin-American branch of this folk-Catholic practice still vibrant today, "where the traumas of individual lives are rendered with cruel and often bloody directness". This also echoes Knight and Zamora's conclusion that Mexico's folkloric religious practices drew inspiration from and appropriated and adapted elements from the synthesis of the pre-Columbian folk cultures and indigenised Spanish Catholicism. Clearly the setting in Mexico abounds with cultural and religious

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[95] *Mexicanidad* refers to a romantic nationalism focused upon "traditional art and artifacts uniting all *indigenistas* regardless of their political stances" (Helland 1990: 8)

[96] *What the water gave me* is also known by the English title, *What I saw in the water*.

collisions, fusions and juxtapositions, setting the stage for depictions potent with the power of hypericonic dynamics.

The quoted passage by Breton also suggests elements of the hypericonic dynamics at work in *Lo que el agua me ha dado,* as Lomas (1993: 5) also noticed when he wrote: "Kahlo registers aspects of experience that social convention dictates ought to remain private and concealed". By confronting spectators with imagery which society deems inappropriate, Kahlo initiates her affective image powers. Private (and female) imagery such as Kahlo displays in *Lo que el agua me ha dado,* in fact, had the kind of revolutionary impact on spectators that the male members of Surrealism had so strongly called for. *Lo que el agua me ha dado*'s unnerving and disturbing imagery confronts, agitates, and provokes spectators as it incites its hypericonic dynamics.

In *Lo que el agua me ha dado,* Kahlo portrays her body reclining in a bath as it would appear to herself; she depicts only the top part of two legs, barely visible, and feet above the water level. The reflectivity conveyed by the doubling mirror effect of the toes and the round metal overflow valve, due to the reflective water surface, suggests another world; the dreamlike objects on the water appear from another, surreal, realm. Surrounding her legs and feet are numerous dream-like images, of which I only mention some.

To the left and in the background an island with a tree, a dead bird and the Empire State Building, have risen from the water. Also on the island a male figure reclines on the left wearing an Aztec face-mask, and a skeleton sits to the right. The image of the skeleton – a favoured motif of Kahlo's – and the man wearing the mask, are both symbols of Aztec art recalling *Diá de Muertos* celebrations. The skeletal figure of death can, according to Helland (1990: 8, 12), only be understood in relation to its Aztec iconography, relating to not only Kahlo's personal struggle for health and life but Mexico's political struggle for independence as well. Seemingly above the island a man and woman who resemble Kahlo's parents pose behind lush leaves. In front of them floats a long-skirted, red and yellow ethnic Tehuana dress, a signature robe from Frida Kahlo's wardrobe.[97] Lastly, an indigenous flower, together with its roots, seedpods, and tendrils appear from between the underwater legs of the figure in the bathtub.

It is not surprising that Breton viewed this painting as surrealist, taking into account the bizarre juxtapositionings of Western and indigenous Mesoamerican imagery, and the depiction of what seems to be fantastical musing, reveries, and oneiric imaginings. That these imaginings emerge from, or appear from under the water, could be seen as suggestive

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[97] Cf. Hunter Oatman-Stanford, Uncovering clues in Frida Kahlo's private wardrobe, *Collectors Weekly*, February 2013. http://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/uncovering-clues-in-frida-kahlos-private-wardrobe/. [Accessed 9 May 2015].

of unveiling what is hidden in the subconscious and bringing it to the surface. The water and the emergence of the various figures on the water also resonate with the notion of giving birth or even of miscarriage or abortion.[98]

The bathing figure stands for the lower body revealing "the unequal dichotomy that fixed male and female as respectively viewer and viewed" (Lomas 1993: 7). Lomas continues: "now the viewer is the viewed and there is no place left for the detached sovereign spectator (the implied continuity between the viewing position and the female body renders my own position as a commentator on it distinctly awkward)". Kahlo's *Lo que el agua me ha dado* clearly affected its image powers on Lomas, having left him feeling uncomfortable and uneasy.

Writing from a woman's perspective, *Lo que el agua me ha dado* does not, however, have such an affective power over me. Rather, the lower body in the water doubles as my own body, the 'implied continuity' to which Lomas refers. The depicted body provides a figurative bodily prop allowing me to complete the work by imaginatively completing the fictional body. Between the lower body in the painting and my own, a hypericonic event is facilitated as the bathtub becomes an imaginative space where the interaction takes place between real (body) and depicted (body), and between depicted (body) and imaginary (onereic scenes). Where Saint Anthony is troubled by demonic apparitions, Kahlo is troubled by memories from her lifetime, traumatic events both personal and ethnic.

The ever-expanding body of hagiographic legends and literature originating from the Kahlo cult contains rich material which resonates in the hypericonic events initiated by distant, temporal and spatial, spectators (both male and female) in the presence of this painted image.

In Kahlo's *El abrazo de amor de el universo, la tierra (México), yo, Diego y el señor Xólotl* (Figure 20), the iconography of elements from her indigenous Mexican culture once again plays a prominent role. In this painting 'the universe' – portrayed as two arms, one day and one night, and a face that almost disappears – embraces 'Mexico', who in turn embraces Kahlo, again in ethnic Tehuana dress, embracing Rivera as though he were a baby. In this painting, 'woman' is depicted as the nurturing figure, while man has the third eye of wisdom on this forehead, indicating that they are dependent on each other.

The figure of 'Mexico', embracing the couple, is the Aztec Earth Mother, Cihuacoatl (Brooks 2008). From above her exposed left breast, where her heart is situated, grows an indigenous tree. The three figures, Rivera, Kahlo, and Cihuacoatl, are wrapped in the arms of the

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[98] At the age of 18 Kahlo was in a streetcar accident that left her partially paralyzed. She underwent numerous operations, because of her severely injured pelvis, which also left her unable to have children. She underwent a number of miscarriages and abortions (Helland 1990: 8).

Universal Mother, who gives existence to all – the sun and moon, the earth, and several kinds of indigenous cactus plant-life found in Mexico; their roots are shown growing under Cihuacoatl's arms. The image of Mother Nature is widely accepted as perpetuating the ancient idea that women are the symbolic source of reproductive power – the role of the female divinity "who represents the earth as the mother and giver of sustenance to all" (Maurer 1994: 550). Although depicting Mother Earth, embracing her children, might allude to Kahlo's inability to have children, *El abrazo de amor de el universo* is filled with life, vitality, and vigour, revealing an inclination toward the picaresque worldview, yet with an undeniable mystical overtone.

The image of Cihuacoatl, a beautiful, awe-inspiring, terrifying goddess is, like the skeleton, another of Kahlo's favourite motifs, a symbol of Aztec art. Images of Cihuacoatl relate to the emanation of light from darkness and life from death, perhaps concerning Kahlo's personal struggle for health. In the foreground is Kahlo's favourite pet dog, *señor Xólotl* (Brooks 2008). A strange looking, hairless breed of dog, in Mexico called 'xoloitxcuintli', with an ancestry traceable back to the Aztecs, *señor Xólotl* represents Itzcuintli – the dog who acts as the guide for the dead, linking the spirit world with the world of the living.

El abrazo de amor de el universe evokes night and day, life and death. The 'Madonna and child' pose of Kahlo and Rivera recalls childbirth, and Kahlo depicts both the 'universe' and the figure of Mexico as women, as Mother Earth that gives us all life. Yet she also includes *señor Xólotl,* representing Itzcuintli, the guide of the dead. As night and day follow on each other, in an unceasing loop, so life must necessarily be followed by death. With *El abrazo de amor de el universe,* Kahlo discloses a picaresque awareness of the seasonal course of life, daily, monthly, even cosmically.

Lo que el agua me ha dado involves Kahlo depicting a dream or fantasy, perhaps a vision or something seen while in a trance. In *El abrazo de amor de el universe* one finds a similar visionary, almost prophetic, depiction with resemblances to the devotional imagery found in the abundant Catholic altarpieces and domestic shrines in Mexico, yet clashing with indigenous Aztec motifs in such a manner as to be transformed into a bizarre nativist culture-religion. Rivera, in *Las tentaciones de San Antonio,* mocks the Catholic Church by portraying an illustrious saint as a plant. In a similar vein, Kahlo portrays herself and Rivera as 'Madonna and child', but surrounded by indigenous Mesoamerican imagery; she undermines Catholic sacred imagery and its patriarchal underpinnings by foregrounding both her indigenous ancestry and its powerful foundations in Mother Earth, the giver of life.

As in, for example, Cyril Coetzee's *T'Kama Adamastor* (Figure 26), analysed in the following chapter, where an indigenous Khoisan fiction is juxtaposed with, among others, Catholic imagery, *El de amor de el universe's* striking fusion yet collision of Mesoamerican and

Catholic motifs stops an imaginatively engaged spectator in his or her tracks. By depicting the Mexican figure of Cihuacoatl cradling Kahlo and Rivera as 'Madonna and child', a motif that resonates with innumerable such historical depictions, Kahlo shocks spectators with the affective power of her image.

4.3   Remedios Varo: cosmic wonder

An artist included in the *In Wonderland* exhibition who celebrated women in her art is Remedios Varo. She identified with Surrealist philosophy, yet fully rejected the male members of the movement's view of women as "incoherent and uncontrolled" (Szulakowska 2011: 94). In fact, 'women' are the central figures in numerous paintings by Varo, of which I focus on *Creación de las aves* [*The creation of birds*] (1957) (Figure 21), and *Bordando el manto terrestro* [*Embroidering the earth's mantle*] (1961) (Figure 22).

In *Creación de las aves*, a scientist-artist – an owl, and therefore Wisdom personified – sits at her desk drawing birds.[99] To her right is a strange alchemical vessel, fed from the stars, which connects to a palette with primary colours. She draws from the palette with a pen that is connected to her heart via a violin, and with moonlight captured in a prism she illuminates her drawing. The moonlight causes the drawn birds to come to life and fly out of another open window. Varo might be alluding to such mythological figures as Daedalus and Pygmalion, both artists whose creations are said to have come to life. In the position of her heart, the scientist-artist has a violin, from which she feeds the pen with which she animates her birds. In other words, she even gives the birds their ability to sing. The alchemically animated birds are the triggers of this images' affective power, since the birds also become vividly animated in the imagination of the spectator.

Moreover, the starlight and moonlight, which bring the birds to life, disclose a fascinated curiosity and marvel at the universe in all its expansive wonder; a fascination which Varo employs repeatedly, and in Figure 22's *Bordando el manto terrestro* as well. With *Creación de las aves* she also demonstrates inquisitiveness related to the interconnectedness of all things, art, life, science and nature (Haynes 1995: 28; Kaplan 2010: 41-41). She parallels alchemy with the creative process (Lyons 2012: 11), with the animation of the birds, via moonlight, alluding to the creative process. The figure of the scientist-artist draws, or creates, living birds that fly off the page, which in turn alludes to the living image, present in the mind's eye of its spectator. If spectators are truly imaginative participants in *Creación de las aves,* uniting all their senses, they might even hear melodious birdsong as the birds fly of the page.

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[99] The two vases spouting luminous fluids reciprocally in the background of the scene in *La creacion de las aves* also allude to Breton's famous prose work, *Les Vases communicants* (Kaplan 1981: 18).

Initially, this painting seems relatively static, but on closer inspection it is filled with movement – the alchemical vessel pouring paint onto the palette, the moonlight streaming in through the window, the scientist-artist drawing her birds and the birds flying off the page. Yet these actions are imaginary, only activated in the imagination of an engaged spectator, imaginatively animating the fantastical world Varo has created. As the birds become animated, living, and moving, they do not only fly of the page, they also incite cascading moving image events between the spectator and the painting, leaving an imaginatively engaged spectator astounded at the power of the living image.

The same strange alchemical vessel is also found in *Bordando el manto terrestro*, the central panel in a triptych from 1961, the first of which is titled *Hacia la torre* (*To the tower*)[100] and the last, *La huida* (*The flight*) (Kaplan 1981: 13-14).[101] It is the second of three episodes portrayed in a narrative triptych, and is consequently the narrative turning point. In *Bordando el manto terrestro,* six young convent girls are held captive in a high tower that looks similar to a medieval scriptorium – these are the same six girls brought to the tower in *Hacia la torre,* while one of these girls, likely a reference to Varo herself, escapes with her boyfriend on the mantle she embroidered in *La huida*. She wove the world into which she takes flight. In this painting, as in Carrington's *The house opposite* (Figure 17), or Kahlo's *Lo que el agua me ha dado*, the hypericonic dynamic is initiated in female terms.

A hooded figure, who Kaplan (1981: 13-14) calls the "Great Master", calls to mind *Creación de las aves*'s scientist-artist, yet he is a more ominous figure. He reads from an instruction manual as he stirs the alchemical vessel from which the girls draw their embroidery thread. Since he appears to be reading from the manual, it is almost as though his thoughts are stirring the vessel containing the mysterious thread the girls use to weave the world. The vessel contains the source from which the world is created – a strange source of power – which feeds and unrolls that which becomes the fabric, sheets, or canvas which becomes the earth, unfurling like mysterious power lines. From the girls' embroidery flows the world – towns, rivers, and an ocean. They embroider the "very fabric of the universe" (Lyons 2012: 7), since the mantle is like a magic cloak turning into the world.

The Surrealists believed the imagination has the power to create worlds, a sentiment clearly reflected in *Bordando el manto terrestro,* which portrays these girls not simply weaving or embroidering the world, but painting it, with the magical power lines emitted from the alchemical vessel being similar to the ink or paint used in creating drawings or paintings. Moreover, like Carrington in *The house opposite,* Varo situates the act of creation in a female context. Where Carrington employs the kitchen, Varo turns to the weaving loom. The needle and thread which embroiders the world is metaphorically doubled by the power

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[100] Oil on masonite, 123 x 100 cm. New York: Sotheby's (24 November 2014).
[101] Oil on masonite, 123 x 100. Mexico: Museo de Arte Moderno.

lines – the pen, ink, or brush – that direct the artist's hand. The power lines are the imaginative powers creating the world. *Bordando el manto terrestro* depicts the world – buildings, towns, the ocean, but this is an imagined world, and one that performs the affective power of an image.

In the background a shrouded figure accompanies the girls' work on a simple wooden flute, while outside the scriptorium-tower Varo depicts a cloudy, astronomical stellar expanse. This stellar expanse, similar to the expanse in *Creación de las aves* which animates the birds, is also the source which creates the world, and which I suggest, in both cases function as hypericonic triggers. What is more, as in *Creación de las aves*, where the scientist-artist also gives the birds their ability to sing, in *Bordando el manto terrestro*, Varo uses the flute motif to engage participative spectators' other senses as well.

Varo does not try to jolt or shock the viewer in the same manner as the male members of Surrealism, or even as Kahlo, did. The figures in the dream-like scenes Varo depicts are not frightening, disturbing, or unsettling. In *Creación de las aves* it is stardust and starlight that animate the birds, and in *Bordando el manto terrestro* the same stardust-filled alchemical vessel provides the thread with which the girls embroider the world. Varo awakens in the spectator a feeling of awe and wonder at the smallness of our existence when compared to the vastness of space. Whereas Kahlo depicts the universe as embracing herself and Rivera, Varo shows the universe as proto-matter, as the very fabric which not only creates the world but gives it life as well.

I am immediately reminded of almost Varo's entire oeuvre, when I see a female figure with a heart-shaped face. The female personae in her oeuvre, in particular the series of powerful female figures from paintings done around the same time, called *Personae astral* are recognisable by the "delicate heart-shaped face with large almond eyes, long sharp nose, and thick mane of hair that marked the artist's own identity" (Zamora 1992: 134). In fact, the scientist-artist from *Creación de las aves* could be called grotesque, if she were not so delicate. In comparison to Kahlo, whose self-portraits are more detailed and naturalistic in their self-representation, and therefore less suggestively symbolic of femininity in general, Varo's figures are delicate yet powerful, magical archetypes of a creative energy that were conceived and depicted as fundamentally female. This also means that Varo's paintings incite their hypericonic dynamics in uniquely female terms.

Whereas Kahlo's oeuvre discloses the clearest collision and synthesis of primitivist-indigenous and European-colonial cultures, in Varo's one finds an affinity with magical realism, evolving a particular variety of surrealism overlapping with Latin-American magical realism (Kaplan 2010: 43). Varo did not pursue the automatic method, but rather her paintings are seemingly carefully planned, leaving no room for the interventions of chance.

The elements in her paintings are not juxtaposed in an accidental or arbitrary manner, but are part of a carefully constructed imaginary realm (Zamora 1992: 136; Kaplan 2010: 29).[102]

In Varo's paintings, her belief in magic is unmistakable, depicted in the distinctive surrealist interrelatedness of plant, animal, human, and mechanical worlds (Kaplan 1981: 13-15). Encouraged by the Surrealists, she also looked to dreams, alchemy, astrology, mysticism, magic, and the occult as avenues through which she could explore the unknown in herself and the universe.[103] She portrays mechanical objects which have been animated, likely through alchemical rituals and magical practices. Both *Creación de las aves* and *Bordando el manto terrestro* are set in fantastical realms, where bizarre and strange figures seem to belong in dream-worlds. Although not strictly juxtapositions of European and indigenous cultures, Varo nevertheless fuses the natural and scientific worlds with the alchemical and supernatural realms, fusions which her Mexican setting allowed her to explore, to create fantastical spheres which entice, enthral, and mesmerize adventurous spectators.

4.4 Leonora Carrington: alchemical Surrealism

In Mexico, Varo resumed the friendship with Leonora Carrington they had begun in Paris (Berland 2010: 33). They developed a collaborative relationship based on their shared spiritualism, and on the affinities of their aesthetic sensibilities and modes of visual expression. The relationship proved crucial to the artistic identities of both women (Zamora 1992: 115). In fact, Aberth (1992: 83-84) compares Varo and Carrington's friendship with that of Picasso and Braque, calling it "an intense, mutually supportive artistic partnership", founded upon a shared visual language whose vocabulary was based on a reciprocal enthrallment with the hermetic, the spiritual and the alchemical. They were united in their interest in Mexican magic and their belief in the potential of female power. Like Kahlo's paintings, examples from Varo and Carrington's oeuvre enact their hypericonic dynamics in female terms.

Both artists, fuelled by their own sense of magical artistry, critiqued the social forces determining subjectivity and controlling sexual desire, revising original esoteric symbols and producing narratives expressing women's experiences (Lyons 2012: 12). Historical

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[102] Before fleeing Paris for Mexico, as part of the Surrealist circle, Varo did play along with numerous collective Surrealist games. She particularly enjoyed *cadavre exquis*, as can be seen at from the numerous collective drawings she made together with other surrealist's at: https://www.pinterest.com/hum1977/remedios-varo/. In her later works, she sometimes employed the techniques of *decalcomania* or *fumage* (Lyons 2012: 2)

[103] Varo was familiar with the alchemical tenets and iconography of the tradition rooted in Spanish medieval thought. She was also, together with another female surrealist, Leonora Carrington, a student of Zen Buddhism (Zamora 1992: 118). Varo's library included books on the Russian mystics, theosophists such as Madame Blavatsky, the complete works of Freud and Jung, materials reflecting on Hindu and Buddhist spirituality, and even 20th century Christian mystics such as Simone Weil, as well as books on Pythagorean ideas, numerology, and sacred geometry, and Platonic philosophy (Haynes 1995: 28; Lyons 2012: 8).

alchemical discourse had described concepts of the feminine as alien, essentialist, wild, primal, unstable, lunatic, and uncontrolled. Carrington, and Varo, endeavoured to transform this state of affairs to that of empowering women, to attempt to reclaim the surrealist imagination for women (Szulakowska 2011: 93).

Carrington also took part in Albert Lewin's competition referred to earlier, painting a unique interpretation of the *Temptation of St Anthony* (1945) (Figure 23). She portrays the renowned *topos* in Western iconography but filled with alchemy and ritual, myths and magic. In this depiction, St Anthony, wrapped in a splendid, yet in some places torn white cloak, sits on the shore of the Nile River. The tears probably allude to the fact that his cloak is not new, referencing his ascetic lifestyle and his daily conflicts and battles against tormenting devils. To the left of St Anthony, an alchemical scene similar to the one in Carrington's *The house opposite* (Figure 17) takes place, with a women-sorceress stirring a bubbling and boiling cauldron, while to Anthony's right six women participate in some manner of supernatural, mysterious ritual.

In a similar manner to Joos van Craesbeeck's *De verzoeking van de heilige Antonius* (Figure 5) which resonated with the temptation depictions that had preceded it, so Carrington's *Temptation of St Anthony* also reverberates with all the interpretations that had gone before activating a cascade of imaginative imaging and after-imaging events between her and spectators mediated by her distinctive composition. Her *Temptation of St Anthony* does not, however, depict the tormenting or seductive apparitions and visions we encountered in Chapter 2.

Carrington inverts the conventional manner of depicting the Flaubertian narrative, demanding that notice be taken of women's own aspirations – the women she portrays perform the alchemical rites and rituals which they want; they are not subject to the whims of men. In comparison to Schöngauer's *Heiliger Antonius, von Dämonen gepeinigt* (Figure 3), for example, Carrington does not depict monstrous or grotesque beasts tearing at St Anthony, tormenting or terrifying the saint. In fact, the other figures completing the scene, who seem to be the same women populating Carrington's *The house opposite,* do not seem particularly interested in St Anthony as much as in their own alchemical rituals. Although Carrington's interpretation is a depiction after the secularisation and sexualisation of the narrative, the women she portrays are also definitely not the seductive *femme fatales* found in, for instance, Corinth's *Die Versuchung der heiligen Antonius (nach Gustave Flaubert)* (Figure 7).

Carrington portrays women as independent, liberated, and unconstrained. Women are potent, strong, compelling, and fascinating beings in their own right, rather than the subordinate figure of mistress, muse, *femme-enfant*, *femme-aimée*, or *femme-fatale.*

Carrington reiterates the importance of women in the *Temptation of St Anthony* on two counts. Firstly, she portrays St Anthony visibly shrinking in stature before the formidable power of the women. Secondly, she shows a woman at the source of the Nile River. The river is as crucial for life in the Egyptian desert, as women are to all life. Similarly to *The house opposite,* Carrington utilises the transformative power of alchemy, using transformation to emphasise the importance of women.

If Carrington's *Temptation of St Anthony* does not enact its hypericonic dynamics through tormenting or seductive image powers, how then is the dynamic activated? In comparison to Van Craesbeeck and Rivera's depictions, Carrington's version is definitely not a playful interpretation. Carrington must have employed the imaginative action of fantasising, but then, all versions based on the legend are fantastical. I do not believe that that is how the spark of the hypericonic dynamic is initiated. In empowering women, Carrington aims to rewrite the importance of the role of women, which means she is fictionalising. Yet even more significantly, and the trigger for the hypericonic event, is a singularly fundamental function of the imagination, namely creativity. As in *The house opposite,* and in the same vein as Varo's depictions, Carrington relates alchemy to women's procreative power and artistic creativity. In other words, Carrington's *Temptation of St Anthony*, jolts the imaginatively engaged spectator in the very way that it differs from all the innumerable St Anthony depictions, exactly by not depicting tormenting beasts or seductive *femme fatales* but by empowering women.

Moreover, Carrington's use of alchemical imagery also relates to the hypericonic dynamic in a more ubiquitous sense. In performing their alchemical rituals, alchemists, whether male of female, obsessively undertook quests to discover the philosopher's stone. In comparison, when confronted with a strange and perplexing artwork such as Carrington's *Temptation of St Anthony*, spectators must perform, to quote Gombrich, "an effort of meaning" (Anderson 1998: 42), undertaking similar quests of interpretation. Furthermore, the success of an alchemical ritual often occurred unexpectedly, as a sudden revelation – similarly to the astonished flash of insight associated with surrealist hypericonic dynamics.

To conclude, with the analyses presented here I indicated that Surrealist philosophy extended beyond the decline of the French movement. Women artists living and working in Mexico appropriated and engaged with the movement's tenets. These women surrealists were never in the movement's 'inner circle' since the male members of Surrealism deemed women as muse but not fellow artist. This condescending notion necessitated the women to develop their own unique feminine idiom, and allowed artists such as Kahlo, Varo, and Carrington to pursue their own interests. In every example, the artworks' hypericonic dynamics is incited not only by the juxtaposition of disparate imagery, but by the women's depictions of femininity and the female.

I showed that key paintings from the oeuvre of Kahlo, Varo, and Carrington are surrealist 'poetic images', juxtaposing disparate imagery and cultures, as well as the feminine experience of the world with that of the male. These examples are inventive and distinctive, revealing elements of dreams, alchemy, and primitivism, the supernatural, magical, mythical, and wonderful, often fused in strange and enigmatic ways. I also demonstrated that the oeuvres of Kahlo in particular reveal bizarre fusions and clashes of western-colonial and indigenous-Mesoamerican cultures. Varo fuses the spheres of science, astronomy in particular, and nature, creating artworks that fascinate and enthral, whereas Carrington depicts a uniquely feminine-alchemically inspired interpretation of the well-known St Anthony *topos*. These examples, each in distinctly feminine ways have the affective image powers to shock spectators and incite the flash of hypericonic dynamics.

This also holds noteworthy implications for artists in the contemporary South African setting. In the following chapter, I question whether select South African artists, active in the wake of Surrealism, appropriated, adapted or engaged with Surrealist notions. The criteria of 'cultural entanglements' – of Western-European and indigenous-African – will be of central significance, particularly also when initiating hypericonic dynamics.

Figure 19. Frida Kahlo, *Lo que el agua me ha dado* (1938)

Figure 20. Frida Kahlo, *El abrazo de amor de el universo, la tierra (México), yo, Diego y el señor Xólotl* (1949)

Figure 21. Remedios Varo, *Creación de las aves* (1957)

Figure 22. Remedios Varo, *Bordando el manto terrestro* (1961)

Figure 23. Leonora Carrington, *The Temptation of St Anthony* (1945)

Chapter 5: In the wake of Surrealism: surrealism in South Africa

South Africa, similarly to Mexico, presents a setting removed from the European artistic capitals, Paris in particular, somewhere where artists can explore their own unique interests. The artists I have selected to discuss in this chapter, Alexis Preller (1911-75), Cyril Coetzee (1959-), and Breyten Breytenbach (1939-), like the Mexican women artists of the previous chapter, only reached their artistic maturity after the Second World War, and therefore after Surrealism's decline. Select artworks from their respective oeuvres, nevertheless, reveal analogous imaginatively productive juxtapositionings and intermeshings of colonial-European and indigenous-African cultures, corresponding to facets of the 'surrealist poetic image', as found in the Mexican cluster, which also incite the sparks and shocks of surrealist hypericonic dynamics.

I focus on Preller, Coetzee, and Breytenbach, since they are artists to whom the epithet 'surrealist' has been attached at some point in their artistic careers. The surrealist label was attached to Preller during various stages of his career, although Preller himself, similarly to Kahlo in some respects, never accepted this pigeon-holing (Berman & Nel 2009(a): xiii). Nevertheless, Berman & Nel (2009: 73-74) suggest that allusions to Surrealism in his painting are relevant – that there are "indisputable Surrealist *elements*" in his oeuvre.[104] According to Louw (2006: 241), one finds in Coetzee's work, and in *T'Kama Adamastor* (Figure 26) in particular, "a surrealist landscape". Painter-poet Breytenbach's art reveals surrealist tendencies that are remarked upon by several commentators.[105]

My primary motivation in choosing these artists remains their highly imaginative meshing of European and African elements into inventive and original artworks. I employ this particular criterion since it is prevalent in the Mexican cluster I investigated in the previous chapter as well as in the key example of Rivera's *Las tentaciones de San Antonio.* Preller, Coetzee, and Breytenbach's respective oeuvres also reveal elements of the spiritual, mysterious, supra-sensorial, and sacredness of indigenous lives, rituals and customs, while also emphasising ethnic vibrancy, and vitality. In the following visual examples, one finds movement and animation, mockery, and an appreciation for traditional wisdom and the cyclical passage of time.

Once again, as in the Latin-American instances, it is not so much the unconscious and involuntary workings of the imagination, emphasised by automatism or chance, which I find prevalent in the oeuvre of these three artists. Rather, their depictions are often playful and

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[104] Berman and Nel (2009: 231) also specifically refer to J.L. Alexander, Cape Town art critic for *Die Burger*, writing in *Art in South Africa since 1900* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1962)*,* where he described Preller as "South Africa's most important surrealist painter".
[105] Cf. Brink (1971), Stander (1974), Viljoen (1974), Kannemeyer (1983), Ferreira (1985), Steenberg (1985), Ohlhoff (1999), Van Vuuren (1999), Du Toit (2005) and Van Vuuren (2014).

dreamlike. They also incorporate, in various and diverse ways, alchemical imagery and the entanglements of colonial-European and indigenous-African cultures, which also explode the affective power of their images.

In contrast to the visits of Breton, Ernst, and Artaud to Mexico during the 1930-40s, there is no evidence that any Surrealist ever visited South Africa. In terms of Surrealist interest in so-called 'primitive cultures' they preferred the arts of the Pacific South Seas and Latin-America above objects from Africa. Both Preller and Breytenbach, however, travelled to Europe: Preller travelled to London and Paris in 1936, and later to Greece and Italy (Berman & Nel 2009(a): xi-xiii), while Breytenbach established himself in Paris in the 1960s, working and exhibiting in Paris, Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Rome, Berlin, and Brussels, to name a few (Kannemeyer 1983).

Surrealism, as a literary movement, was introduced to the Afrikaans audience through poets who visited Paris.[106] Uys Krige (1910-1987) was, according to Nienaber-Luitingh (1998: 541-45), quite the cosmopolitan, particularly in comparison with his contemporaries. He travelled extensively throughout France and Spain, and was even a prisoner of war in Italy for two years after his capture at Tobruk, after he had joined the South African army's North African campaign during the Second World War. He was still a student in South Africa when he translated his first French short stories into Afrikaans (published between 1928 and 1932), before he travelled to Paris in 1931.

Krige was seen as an outsider, choosing to explore the artistic traditions of France and Spain, rather than the Netherlands, Germany or England (Ohlhoff 1999: 121). Through his exposure to Surrealist poetry, he in his own work emphasised the conflict between dream and reality. He also translated the poetry of the French Surrealists, Éluard in particular in the anthology *Éluard en die surrealisme* (1962).[107] Both Brink (1971: 1) and Stander (1974: 1) hailed this anthology as the premier translation of Surrealist poetry into Afrikaans: "Deur sy vertalings uit Frans en Spaans het Krige belangrike werke uit die wêreldliteratuur toeganklik gemaak vir Afrikaanse lesers wat dié tale nie self magtig is nie", including Afrikaans artists (Nienaber-Luitingh 1998: 548).

A poet just a decade younger than Krige, and undoubtedly enriched by his travels to France, is Jan Rabie (1920-2001), who also travelled to and lived in Paris (Steenberg 1999: 500-504). There he lived through the initial stages of Surrealism's decline, nonetheless feeling an affinity to the movement, in particular regarding the irrational and contingent

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[106] Afrikaans poets have been in dialogue with the broader European poetic traditions since at least the early twentieth century. (Cf. Meiring 1991; Ohlhoff 1999: 25).

[107] In *Éluard en die surrealisme,* Krige (1962: 29-30) calls the poetry of Bartho Smit and Ingrid Jonker surrealist, refering to French Surrealism as "'n openbaring wat hul werk 'n nuwe rigting gegee het en blywend verryk het".

unpredictability. In particular he drew on Surrealist notions of the fantastical and absurd, filling his tales with grotesquely surrealist portrayals of the supernatural, and in his work *Een-en-twintig* (1956), "[vorm] die surrealisme deel van die kulturele verwagtingshorison van hierdie bundel" (Steenberg 1999: 504).

In the Latin-American setting some forty-seven women can be grouped together in the surrealist cluster. In the South African context, because the country is so far removed from Europe and since the Surrealists did not have as much of an interest in Africa as in Mexico, I found it more difficult to distinguish artists who could be situated in the wake of Surrealism. I considered Jane Alexander (1959-), but as Mercer (2013: 80) also acknowledges, Alexander's oeuvre reveals an affinity to the "post-colonial grotesque" rather than the fantastical or comically grotesque. Fred Page's (1908-84) art has been compared to that of the Surrealists, Magritte in particular (Fourie 1997: 130). One clearly finds in Page's work elements of the fantastical, and he employs chance, dreams, dark humour, and strange and unpredictable juxtapositions in his highly imaginative artistic productions (Fourie 1997: 80-83; 129-33) Both Hardy Botha (1947-) and Norman Catherine's (1948-) oeuvres also disclose the bizarre juxtapositionings of surrealist 'poetic images'. While Page, Botha, and Catherine's oeuvres are clearly reminiscent of Surrealism, their works do not reveal the criteria of juxtaposed cultures which I am specifically focussing on in this chapter. I also considered African artists including Jackson Hlungwani (1923-2010) and Johannes Phokela (1966-). However, since their inclusion might be construed as eurocentric on my part, I decided it would be more appropriate to exclude them from this study.[108]

I specifically selected artworks from Preller, Coetzee, and Breytenbach's oeuvre which seem to spark hypericonic dynamics. Preller and Coetzee both explore indigenous legends and narration, reviving these specifically because indigenous cultures and myths have, historically, been oppressed and ignored particularly during the colonial and apartheid regimes in South Africa, and lost during westernised modernisation. The irony that these artists are of Western European descent is not lost on me. Of the three figures Breytenbach's political, anti-apartheid stance and actions are the most explicit. He feels an affinity with a movement such as Surrealism for its social and political revolutionary active stance, and while he was originally trained as a painter, it was through his challenging and unsettling poetry that he initially gained notoriety.

Lastly, I purposefully discuss these artists in a non-chronological order. I choose to examine Breytenbach last, although he belongs, to be exact, between Preller and Coetzee. The setting in Africa and her cultures is clearly of primary importance to my argument in this chapter. In Preller the prehistorical, aboriginal character of African, Egyptian (and Greek) cultures is fundamental, whereas Coetzee effects a more topical and current debate by

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[108] Cf. Clifford (1988) and Farago (2009).

'politicising' indigenous African culture. This evolution or development reaches its explicit pinnacle in Breytenbach's anti-apartheid posture. Secondly, in Breytenbach one finds a clear literary-poetic and visual artistic connection, the same word-image connection Mitchell discovers in Blake. Therefore, I purposefully decide to investigate Breytenbach last, since through him the hypericonic poetic image as originally described by Mitchell as a device for reflecting on the word-image dichotomy once again becomes active. Mitchell situates his poetic image between the graphic and verbal extremes, which is precisely where I would also situate Breytenbach's (surrealist) poetic images.

5.1   Alexis Preller: discovering archaic Africa

In recent writing Alexis Preller is described as a "visionary and poet" (Berman & Nel 2009: 324). His work intersects "Greek mythology, Mapogga culture, hieratic emblematic signs such as maize cobs, shells and African masks, and Egyptian motifs" (Berman & Nel 2009(a): xi-xiii).[109] Besides his extensive travels through Europe, he also explored Africa, visiting Swaziland, the Seychelles, Zanzibar, Egypt and the Congo, aiming to create a singular artistic idiom – an African modernism.[110]

From Preller's oeuvre I have selected *Collected images (Orchestration of themes)* (1952) (Figure 24) and *Discovery (of the Sea Route around Africa)* (1595-62) (Figure 25), for their metapictorial qualities and hypericonic dynamics. In *Collected images* Preller assembles a juxtaposed compendium of some of the most important thematic motifs in his personal iconography. In the meta-image carried in this painting, eighteen depicted objects, alluding to painted images in his oeuvre, are collected into a kind of cabinet, suggesting cabinets of rarities or curiosities of still-life depictions, with eighteen box-like compartments, each with a still-life object within its own compartment. These concise emblematic 'idols' are "an array of perfect miniatures", a succinct metapictorial summation of Preller's "unique identity as an artist" (Berman & Nel 2009: 151). Clearly distinguishable are imagery from *The Candles* (1948)[111], *The Mapogga Women* (1950),[112] *The Kraal* (1948),[113] *Sebastian II* (1947),[114] and *Icarus* (1951).[115] Berman & Nel (2009(a): 125) write the following about this painting:

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[109] Preller first encountered the Ndebele people in December 1935, when he came upon the traditionally dressed women working in the fields north of Pretoria, and he became instantly fascinated by the women's unusual and colourful appearance. 'Mapoggas' or 'Mapog's people' are members of the Ndzundza group of Southern Ndebele whose leader was named Mabhogo (Berman & Nel 2009: 27).

[110] Preller strove towards a modernist epithet, yet one, similar to Surrealism, that was not part of the twentieth century mainstream. Berman & Nel (2009: 145-46) explains that, in contrast to the prevailing trends in Europe and North America, Preller did not make a move towards abstraction – this is exactly where he departed from modernist developments, moreover, finding his muse in Africa, in a world "ancient, arcane, and separated [from] the throbbing urban pulse of industrialised America and Europe".

[111] Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm. Pretoria: Pretoria Art Museum.

[112] Oil on canvas, 48 x 91 cm. Pretoria: Pretoria Art Museum.

[113] Oil on canvas on board, 98 x 121 cm. Cape Town: Iziko South African National Gallery.

His solution to the problem of organising, or 'orchestrating', such a large array of different elements is as unusual as the images themselves: a precisely drafted, virtually *tromp l'oeil*, cabinet, divided into 18 compartments, in which he has installed the gems of his imagination. Here, co-existing on a common level of illusionary reality, and on a common scale, are subjects large and small, inanimate and organic, mysterious and mystical – an assemblage that epitomises the blurring of the boundaries between actual and imagined reality.

Berman & Nel's assertion that Preller's painting 'blurs the boundaries between actual and imagined reality' immediately calls to mind Breton's notion of "the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality" into the new state of *surreality* (Breton 2010: 14), emphasising the importance of imagining. I also consider this statement an indication that *Collected images* will elicit the spark of hypericonic events in engaged spectators.

Allusions playing on *tromp l'oeil* engage numerous art historical episodes, from the ancient Greek tale of the art competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasius, the Renaissance illusionistic fresco ceiling paintings by such Quattrocento artists as Andrea Mantegna, as well as the seventeenth-century Dutch elaborations in *tromp l'oeil* painted by, among others, the Flemish artist Cornelius Gysbrechts. *Tromp l'oeil,* both rejected as a mere trick of the eye, or admired, especially during the seventeenth century, for its display of artistic brilliance and insight into optical effects: "displays objects so realistically painted that the distinction between reality and representation is beyond our perception – at least for a second" (Grootenboer 2005: 4). A *tromp l'oeil's* hypericonic potential is attained in the bodily presence of the spectator; *tromp l'oeil* can only play their trick games, or enact their deceptions, when a spectator is present. *Tromp l'oeil,* according to Grootenboer (2005: 45) insists on the presence of a spectator, yet one, however, who is willing to be caught in the depiction's imaginative trap.

Besides the fact that Preller painted them in *tromp l'oeil* format, thereby engaging historical themes in the making and use of imagery*,* he consciously collated significant elements of his oeuvre in one painting – doubling imagery in his works by re-picturing his paintings in concise emblematic 'idols' exhibited in separate compartments within a painted frame. *Collected images* as a painting may be described as a self-reflexive performance of an imaginatively synoptic awareness by Preller of his distinctive individuality as an artist.

Collected images also incites its hypericonic eventfulness not only through *tromp l'oeil,* but through its suggestion of cabinets of curiosity as well. Doubling his unique personal iconography, Preller includes depictions of a cello, various miniature statuaries, numerous candles, sea shells, an egg carton, Mapogga women, guinea fowl, and fish, juxtaposing these

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[114] Oil on board, 74 x 40 cm. Private collection.
[115] Oil on canvas, 25.5 x 30.5 cm. Pretoria: Pretoria Art Museum.

exotic items, some of which are natural and organic and others artificial and lifeless – *naturalia* and *artificalia* – just as one would find in a Renaissance cabinet of rarities.

Preller's work, similarly in some respects to Varo in the previous chapter, does not only elicit its hypericonic sparks through the unnerving merging of incongruent worlds, but also through the wonder and curiosity at the natural world he evokes in an imaginatively engaged spectator. A depiction of cabinets of curiosity and *tromp l'oeil,* clearly referencing the "age of curiosity" (Evans & Marr 2006: 8-9), already prompts reverberating after-imaging cascading events in the mind's eye of the spectator, and between artwork and spectator; *Collected images* resonates with countless such representations of wonder for exotic Africa.

Besides disclosing a penchant for the imaginative activities of curiosity and wonder, *Collected images,* nevertheless, also exerts an affective image power on engaged spectators through its collision and fusion of African, Egyptian and Greek imagery in a decidedly seventeenth century, western mode. By juxtaposing the different emblematic images of his oeuvre, which emphasise indigenous cultures, in such an unquestionably Western manner, Preller aims to unsettle his spectators, especially reminding those of us from European descent of the condescending manner in which seventeenth century explorers viewed 'exotic' Africa.

For the execution of the enormous mural *Discovery (of the Sea Route around Africa)* (1959-62) (Figure 25), commissioned for the former Transvaal Provincial Administration Building (now the Pretoria Government Building), Preller's approach is "reminiscent of Quattrocento artists and the Italian fresco tradition" (Berman & Nel 2009(a): 193). Preller, as an artist whose art is sourced from various European traditions, is clearly enthralled by the exotic qualities and fascinating cultures of the African continent. He grapples with both his European and African heritage, leading to the creation of a dreamlike diorama, panoramic in its conception, theatrical in its execution, engaging in a quest to grasp the history, beauty, strangeness and wonder of the explorers themselves and of the indigenous cultures of the continent.

The left section of the mural depicts a projective geometric perspectival space which directly alludes to the fifteenth century artist Piero Della Francesca's *Flagellation* (ca 1469).[116] By alluding to Della Francesca's spatial compositions, Preller's mural composition visually situates the historical narrative in the era of exploration and discovery. He paints his mural in the style of the time to which it refers, activating the hypericonic dynamic. In this historic room, at the western commencement of the voyage of discovery, all-powerful Portuguese figures prepare for the departure to find the sea route to the East.

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[116] Oil and tempura on panel, 58 x 81 cm. Urbino: Galleria Nationale Delle Marche.

Just to the right of this scene a monumental figure, robed in finery and standing behind an exquisite celestial globe, gazes out to the East, to the far end of the mural, making eye contact with his peer, the great Indo-Arabic navigator who is accompanied by a rendition of the huge sweeping arcs of the celestial observatories at Jaipur in India, according to Berman & Nel (2009(a): 193-99). The iconography of the arc may just as likely be connected with early depictions of Tycho Brahe's (1546-1601) celestial observatory (Van Helden 1995). The two monumental figures and their instruments bracketing the African panorama represent early modern scientific discoveries which enabled maritime voyages of discovery. In this singular device the returned gaze connects these two great navigating traditions also bracketing the continent coast to coast.

The central axis of *Discovery* focuses upon a third figure, a seated bard with a lute and globe suggesting his role as a visionary poet and epic narrator. Berman & Nel (2009(a): 193-99) maintains that it is a giant astrolabe, tipped up into a *mandorla*-like form and inscribed with stellar images, which dominate the centre of the panel and dwarf the bard. In contrast, my contention, which prompts the hypericonic spark for imaginative spectators, is that the depiction of the bard functions as a hypericonic poetic device, reflecting the bard-as-artist. The bard-artist, perhaps even a reference to Preller himself, is not dwarfed by an 'astrolabe' as Berman & Nel calls it, rather he is framed and given authority by the *mandorla*-shaped aureola surrounding him.

In the largest middle section, Africa is unfolded in enormous complexity, crowned by the central image of the sun (Berman & Nel 2009(a): 199). Preller depicts flocks of indigenous birds – herons, egrets, hoopoes, blue cranes, guinea-fowl and quails – and exotically coloured indigenous plants, as well as architectural settlements, huts and granaries. He also includes tribesmen and –women, participating in various tribal rituals and ceremonies. In comparison to the left and right sections, suggesting Europe and India and depicted by Preller as drab, austere, and filled with geometric shapes, the middle African section is organic, vibrant, colourful, and filled with jubilant motion.

Collected images and *Discovery* share thematic similarities, yet compositionally they are dramatically different. Both metapictures allude to the Renaissance, and juxtapose 'exotic' Africa with 'familiar' Europe. However, *Collected images* is static and its colours muted, whereas *Discovery* is more animated and colourful. *Collected images* depicts an inventorial summary of key imagery in Preller's oeuvre, whereas *Discovery* shows a narrative summary of the sources of this imagery. Like *Collected images*, with its allusions to Renaissance cabinets of curiosity, *Discovery* references the age of discovery also implying the imaginatively directed activities of wonder and curiosity. Unlike Varo's astronomical cosmic curiosity, Preller is fascinated more by the extraordinary phenomena of the natural world, and Africa in particular. Like *Collected images, Discovery* also leaves an imaginatively

participating spectator, who views Africa as merely exotic and strange, discomfited and unnerved. Depicting Europe as stolid and limited, in comparison to wildly energetic and lively Africa, I propose discloses Preller's fascination, captivation even, with Africa. Preller illustrates his own unique undiscovered fairy-tale, a mythical fictional world which is different from the real Africa discovered by Western explorers.

5.2   Cyril Coetzee: alchemical history painting

Cyril Coetzee situates himself within "both European and African tradition", creating artworks "in the meeting and cross-pollination of cultures, beliefs, mythologies and histories" (Coetzee 2008). One such a painting, which reveals a striking resemblance to Preller's *Discovery,* is perhaps the most famous work from Coetzee's oeuvre: *T'kama-Adamastor* (1999) (Figure 26).[117] Coetzee found inspiration for this work in André P. Brink's short novel *The first life of Adamastor* (1988). Brink reimagined elements from Luís Vaz de Camões's *Os Lusíadas* (first published in 1572). Stanza 61 from *Os Lusíadas* relates the tale of Adamastor, Thetis, and Adamastor's transformation into Table Mountain (Coetzee 2000: 6; Oliphant 2000: 60).

Brink converts Adamastor into T'Kama, a Khoi chieftain whose people witness the arrival of Portuguese ships. In this manner Brink "playfully and ironically" subverts the stereotypes of the colonial discovery narrative, since instead of presenting the indigenous people, from the European standpoint, as the 'other', in this reimagining it is the Portuguese arriving on their ships who are viewed by the Khoisan people as 'other' (Coetzee 2000: 9). Coetzee's massive mural fuses, merges, collides, and clashes western and indigenous imagery so successfully that basically every motif he employs sparks a hypericonic jolt, as they invert the European position of domination.

In the novel, Adamastor – as the Khoisan leader T'Kama – looks back at the original encounter between the Portuguese and the Khoi, from a late twentieth-century perspective (Coetzee 2000: 7). Both Brink and Coetzee aimed to critique our colonial past, turning eurocentric 'discovery' narratives on their head. Coetzee's initial aim with *T'Kama Adamastor* was to "paint a reconstruction of the European 'discovery narrative', which would make ironic and fantastic use of a variety of tropes and clichés of the colonial world-view. It would be partly playful, but at the same time present a serious critique" (Coetzee 2000: 4), directed firstly as satirical commentary on the examples of colonialist history

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[117] Coetzee was commissioned to paint this artwork for the Cullen Library at the University of Witwatersrand. The west wall of the library, directly opposite the entrance, holds Colin Gill's *Colonists 1826* (1925), while the south wall holds *Vasco da Gama – Departure for the Cape* (1936) by John Henri Amshewitz (Coetzee 2000: 1). Coetzee's *T'kama-Adamastor* was installed on the north wall of the library in 1999.

painting murals in the Cullen Library (University of Witwatersrand), and secondly, towards the unwary spectator.

Coetzee devises a fusion of different myths, legends, and fictions for his visual representation.[118] He sought inspiration from travel books, Africana and Camõeseana, books on flora and fauna, anthropological photographs, alchemical books, and Renaissance and twentieth century paintings (Coetzee 2000: 6, 8). For example, in chapter 11 of Brink's novel, T'Kama, as he narrates the legend, takes an unexpected step away from the narrative, situating the journey in the time frame of Renaissance history, mentioning Bosch, Da Vinci and Michelangelo, Columbus, Luther, and the fall of Constantinople (Brink 2009: 63). Coetzee (2000: 15) explains that these references were a key motivation for him to extend his allusions beyond only travel books, to include Renaissance art. He felt that elements of the folk parable, typical of Flemish Renaissance emblematics, corresponded best with the parable elements of Brink's narrative, which incorporated Khoi folk and creation myths, often involving animals. To that end, in creating his own animal-headed figures, Coetzee most often thought of Bruegel's *Netherlandish proverbs* (1559).[119]

Coetzee's interlacing of the classical, Camões and Brink narratives evokes Flax's (1984: 5) notion of fabulation and counter-fabulation. Seemingly, each following iteration of the legend is told against the previous version. In the 'original' classical legend the titan Adamastor is trapped in the earth as Table Mountain, whereas Camões' retelling occurs as a counter-fabulation told from the perspective of the Portuguese discoverers. Brink, in his reimagining of the myth, takes an indigenous-Khoisan legend as catalyst, recounting the Western discovery of Africa from an African point of view. I maintain it is also this African discovery of the existence of the West which triggers *T'kama-Adamastor's* hypericonicity.

Coetzee's painted narrative, derived from Brink's novel, relates this vantage point, with Coetzee merging existing Western and Khoisan mythology into a rather uneasy composition, wherein he weaves together elements of Western supernatural-mysticism, more typical of his own pictorial style, with a comically grotesque African indigenous legend. It is in this

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[118] Several authors note the diversity of sources integrated in Camões and Brink's narratives, and Coetzee's depiction. Brink drew upon Camões's *Os Lusíadas,* while Camões in turn adapted and appropriated an assortment of Classical myths and literary antecedents, alluding to Homer's Polyphemus and the comic lineages of Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Oliphant 2000: 60; Twindle 2012: 34). Both Nethersole (2000: 54-55) and Oliphant (2000: 65) remark on the fact that Brink's narrative interweaves the original myth, Camões's version, as well as other elements from the European and traditional-indigenous legends, thereby intertwining elements from Greek-, Christian- and Khoisan mythology. Twidle (2012: 39) calls Coetzee's painting: "[e]very bit as self-aware as its source material", while Oliphant (2000: 59), remarks on the interweaving into the narrative of European, colonial, and indigenous narratives, writing about "a web of texts" that surround both Brink's novel and Coetzee's painting. The painting, like Wylie (2000: 161) observes fuses, unites, places alongside each other "fantasy and fact, the imaginary and the naturalistically observed, [...] startlingly juxtaposed".

[119] Oil on panel, 117 x 163 cm. Berlin: Gemäldegalerie.

uncomfortable counter-fabulation, of Africa's discovery of the West, and in the strange fusion of mystical-Western and picaresque-African elements that I propose the hypericonic dynamic is activated.

T'kama-Adamastor has to be read from left to right, following key moments in Brink's narrative, which Coetzee organised according to a "tripartite structure that did not break completely into three panels", finding a Renaissance model in Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Coetzee 2000: 7-9).[120] As the painting is read from left to right, it also shows the transition from day to night, disclosing a similar awareness of the cyclical course of life as is found in Kahlo's *El abrazo de amor de el universe* (Figure 20), for example.

In the upper left corner of *T'kama-Adamastor,* the ships arrive, resembling bizarrely grotesque birds, after T'Kama's description. The Portuguese sailors disembarking from the ship therefore also resemble peculiar birds, as they are dressed in period costume.[121] Following T'Kama's description, the period dress of the sailors, hatching from eggs, are, from the Khoi's point of view, exotic, marvellously strange and as vividly coloured as birds (Coetzee 2000: 10).[122] Having the sailors appear bird-like allowed Coetzee to allude to Bosch, who in various works introduced bird-headed figures and flying ships with bird-headed prows. Coetzee also has the disembarking sailors 'hatch' from avian eggs, reminiscent of Cesare da Sesto's *Leda and the swan* (*after da Vinci*) (1515-20), where children burst out of eggs.[123]

The main motif of the left section is a "burlesque baptism" (Coetzee 2000: 12-13). A winged conquistador baptises Khoi women, chanting a Hail Mary over their heads, which Coetzee portrays as a kind of *ex voto*, floating in the air. The conquistador's wings once more allude to the 'bird visitors', as well as images of saints often found in colonial territories where Catholic influences predominated, similar to imagery encountered in the Mexican setting. In the background of the left section, Coetzee depicts the raising of the *padrão* and the exchange of gifts for women.[124] The floating Hail Mary and winged conquistador spark *T'kama-Adamastor's* first hypericonic flash.

The figures of T'Kama and a white Portuguese woman, Brink and Coetzee's translation of Thetis, standing under an acacia tree, dominate the middle section of the painting. Like

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[120] Oil on oak panels, 220 x 390 cm. Madrid: Museo del Prado.
[121] Coetzee drew upon depictions of flora and fauna in travel books he found in the Cullen library (Coetzee 2000: 14). He did at times purposefully, yet playfully diverge from scientific accuracy so as to reflect the fantastical errors of the early European travellers. The faces of the Portuguese sailors are based on actual indigenous bird species, including the Cape peregrine, hadeda, spoonbill, hawk, Cape spotted owl; some of the South African flora represented in the painting are protea, euphorbia, aloe, umbrella thorn tree.
[122] Brink (2009: 15-20).
[123] Oil on panel, 70 x 74 cm. Salisbury: Wilton House.
[124] Brink (2009: 20-24).

Adam and Eve – the origins of the creation myth figures – the picaresque personage of T'Kama and also the white woman of the legend are unknown, mysterious. The way they are posed alludes to Renaissance illustrations of Adam and Eve as well as to Albrecht Dürer's *Fall of man: Adam and Eve* (1507) (Coetzee 2000: 17).[125] Between the Adam and Eve figures, Coetzee depicts a giant crocodile[126] – the African equivalent of the serpent, the compositional axis of *T'Kama Adamastor,* when day starts turning into night (Coetzee 2000: 19).[127]

The right section of the painting relates the narrative after T'Kama's tribe has returned to Algoa Bay.[128] In the background Coetzee depicts a different group of Portuguese sailors carrying the woman back to their bird-ship, echoing the motif in the background of the left section where men are also shown carrying a woman away. The foreground of the right section shows the sailors kicking and beating T'Kama, with the sailors once more depicted as bird-men. In this instance they resemble the hybrid bird-creatures in Grünewald's *Temptation of St Anthony* (Figure 4)*,* while T'Kama's fate refers to various classical and biblical martyrs: Prometheus, St Anthony, and Christ in Gethsemane (Coetzee 2000: 19-21).

Completing this scene is the figurehead from the ship's prow – the carved figure of a woman that the sailors used to deceive T'Kama, as well as an "alchemical illustration representing the hermaphrodite" (Coetzee 2000: 21). This floating halo – mirroring the *ex voto* from the left section – portrays an alchemical union of a winged avian egg merged with a male and female figure on top, surrounded by astrological signs, stars and moons. Coetzee explains that this image is "a powerful symbol of the integration of opposites".[129] This strange 'integration', which nevertheless remains divided, yet again functions to disconcert viewers, causing the surrealist flash of the hypericonic power of the image.

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[125] Oil on panel, two panels 209 x 81 cm each. Madrid: Museo del Prado.
[126] Brink (2009: 97).
[127] Behind T'Kama is an ostrich – a reference to his name, which translates into Big Bird, or Ostrich (Coetzee 2000: 10). In the Khoi language, 'bird' is also the slang term for the male member, yet another allusion to Rabalais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* Another reference to the Khoi language is T'Kama's raised right hand, gesturing the 'presence of giraffes' in the sign language used by Khoi hunters (Coetzee 2000: 14; Twindle 2012: 39). In front and to the left of T'Kama sitting on the ground, Coetzee portrays Khamab, the Khoi's medicine man, and an integral character in the narrative. The middle section is completed by further elements found in Brink's narrative: the hare found in front of Eve, the two tortoises trying to mate, as well as the figure of the "'*thas'* jackal", to Eve's right (Coetzee 2000: 18). The image of the hare as a fertility symbol often occurs in Renaissance depictions of Adam and Eve; it is even found in the copperplate from which Dürer derives his famous work. The hare is also an important alchemical symbol and is shown in many Rosicrucian illustrations. For alchemists the hare seems to have represented Luna or Mercury, the 'original feminine power'. The *thas* jackal alludes to the dead who return in the shape of animals to torment the living, stealing sheep in the night form right under the eyes of the watchmen (Coetzee 2000: 18).
[128] Brink (2009: 114-119).
[129] Coetzee's clear interest in alchemy discloses an obvious kinship with the mystical holding pattern. Further proof that Coetzee feels an affinity to this worldview framing can be found in articles he wrote on Wassily Kandinsky, cf. Coetzee (1988) and Coetzee (1990).

Coetzee's *T'Kama Adamastor* can be compared with, for example, Kahlo's *El abrazo de amor de el universe* in revealing a similar picaresque excitement for nature and life, depicting various animal-related episodes from Brink's novel with potency, and exuberance. Moreover, the movement from day to night is paralleled in the motion of the ocean and the arrival and later departure of the bird-ships, and the animated vigour with which Coetzee illustrates the sheep, ostrich, crocodile, hare, tortoises, jackal, and bird-sailors. However, the hovering Immaculate Conception Marian *ex voto* and flaming magical formula in the baptism episode and astrological alchemical illustration reveals something of the hidden or transcendent, and mysterious supernatural world, a world where, for example, inorganic ships can be biologically animated. It is through this strange merging of Western and African imagery, and mystical and picaresque elements, that *T'Kama Adamastor* affects its hypericonic image power.

5.3   Breyten Breytenbach: a surrealist painter-poet

Similar to Kahlo in the Mexican setting, in South Africa Breyten Breytenbach's situation is unique. Although originally trained as a painter, he first gained prominence through his poetry.[130] As I mentioned, numerous commentators have noted surrealist affinities in his oeuvre, which is also the most overtly politically motivated.[131]

From its inception his writing reveals surrealist juxtapositionings, as the title of his first volume, *Die ysterkoei moet sweet* [*The iron cow must sweat*] (Johannesburg, 1964) suggests, or, as in a later prose volume, *All one horse: fictions and images* (Johannesburg, 1989), the title of which Breytenbach borrowed from a Chuang Tzu saying: "Heaven and earth are one finger, all things are one horse" (Breytenbach 1989: 9).[132] Such phrases immediately evoke the spark of surrealist 'poetic images'.[133] Breytenbach's engagement with Surrealism and appropriation of surrealist themes are expressed in the prominence he gives to the imagination, play and dreams, a preference for the products of the unconscious and fortuitous poetical juxtapositions, and a rejection of the rational.

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[130] Breytenbach studied Fine Arts at the Michaelis School of Art, as well as Afrikaans-Nederlands at the University of Cape Town before establishing himself in Europe, Paris in particular (Kannemeyer 1983).

[131] Breytenbach was even imprisoned after entering South Africa illegally, using a false French passport, in 1975 (Golz 1995: 16).

[132] The other source of inspiration Breytenbach is fervently dedicated to is Zen-Buddhism (Galloway 1974; Steenberg 1985; Viljoen 1998).

[133] Breytenbach's interest in Africa is also revealed in his appropriation of Swahili-proverbs which he translates into Afrikaans (Coetzee 1980: 35-36). These proverbs also disclose a undeniable surrealist inclination (Breytenbach 1972):
"my kokosneut, die son, onthaal die ganse uitspansel"
"toe die maan daar bo 'n melkkoei tussen die kalwers was"
"onderweg het ek 'n ketting sien lê maar wie tel die wit miere op?"

As a painter and poet Breytenbach reconciles the two poles – poetry and painting – of Surrealist art (Stander 2009). He views both forms as equal, and as expressions of the same creative energy, with the interplay of image and word being characteristic of his oeuvre. Perhaps the most crucial feature of Surrealism he explored is the movement's freer approach to images. Galloway (1976: 23, 32) describes Breytenbach as a "skilder-aan-die-woord". Two artworks by Breytenbach which stage self-knowledge, and which each disclose a hypericonic potential, is the painting *Autoportrait masqué* (1990) (Figure 27) and the drawing *L'homme au miroir* (1990) (Figure 28).

These two works do not engage matters arising from indigenous-Africa as explicitly as do Preller and Coetzee's examples. However, Breytenbach's fascination and love for Africa nevertheless remain foundational to his artistic production. Van Vuuren (2014: 79) refers to Africa as "voedingsbodem vir sy oeuvre". Like Preller, Breytenbach travelled extensively throughout Africa, visiting Egypt, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Tanzania (Coetzee 1980: 29-30), and he dedicates *Scrit. Painting blue a sinking ship* (Amsterdam, 1972): "aan die volk van Suid-Afrika aan wie 'n burgerskap in hul geboorteland ontsê word", a statement that also indicates his political orientation. One cannot help but observe in Breytenbach's oeuvre a distinct and explicit amalgamation and incorporation of African imagery and motifs. Africa, according to Brink (1980: 26), is expanded to "'Maäfrika': tot almoeder, tot beminde en tot *ek"*. Africa is much more than merely a geographical or political object; Africa is Breytenbach's metaphorical reference point.

Autoportrait masqué, as the name suggests, is a self-portrait of Breytenbach, easily recognisable with his bearded countenance, depicted as a painter – he portrays himself holding a brush and palette. According to Stander (2009), Breytenbach also portrays himself posed in an outfit similar to those worn by sixteenth- and seventeenth century master-painters. Breytenbach, in other words, alludes to various elements of artistry – painter, brush, and palette. Breytenbach's head, evoking photographic montage, is clearly not attached to his body, possibly hinting at a separation of heart and mind, at the illogical juxtaposed with the logical. The head addresses the spectator while the body and the gesturing arms with palette and brush, performing the action of painting, are directed towards an open window – at once a creation of the painter and an aperture into the fictional world through which the flying figure, like a conventional muse, enters the artist's world, from a strange and surreal beyond.

Instead of depicting himself in front of the customary canvas, Breytenbach depicts himself in front of an open window. The open window, Stander indicates, is a common theme in Breytenbach's painted oeuvre, which suggests elements of liminality and of an inside opposed to an outside, of openness and vulnerability, of permeability and penetrability. An open window motif also immediately calls to mind Leon Battista Alberti's notion of the

rectangular frame of the painting as an open window or '*aperta finestra*' (Friedberg 2006: 1).[134] Since Alberti made his famous statement in the mid-fifteenth-century the window motif has acquired a history of reception and exploration as a figurative trope for the framing of the fictional worlds displayed in paintings (Friedberg 2006: 5); it has developed into a *theme*, an iconographic type, signifying the eye of the painter (Gottlieb 1981: 287, 293). Breytenbach's figure is therefore doubled in this self-portrait. He shows himself (the head), and the particular artistic eye of the painter (the window).

Two remaining figures complete the painting. Entering the room through the window is a figure Stander (2009) calls a 'cat-woman'; Stander curiously and puzzlingly describes her as having a darker skin tone and Eastern features, and wonders if she might imply Breytenbach's wife, a woman of Vietnamese ancestry. Sitting beside the figure of Breytenbach, underneath the open window, is a strange hybrid lupine-like creature. Stander surmises as to the meanings of the cat-woman and wolf:

> Die katvrou teenoor die wolf kan ook verteenwoordegind wees van die konflikstaat tussen sogenaamde hoë kultuur en barbarisme. Só beskou is die wolf 'n simbool van die politieke waghond wat 'n poging aanwend om die kunstenaar se vrou (muse) te verwilder. Die moontlikheid bestaan dat beide karaktertrekke van die wolf en katvrou kombineer is in die persona van die skilder, want teenstelling funksioneer ook as gelykstelling binne 'n Surrealistiese omgewing.

I am not convinced that the female figure is a 'cat-woman' representing Breytenbach's wife. Rather this female figure to me seems to be wearing a mask, probably the titular mask. Similarly to the manner in which Breytenbach's detached head is fixed in the painting, the mask gives the impression of being pasted together in a manner reminiscent of collage – placing incongruent components side-by-side and exploiting chance – and is therefore, I suggest, a direct reference to Surrealist art-making practice, triggering the hypericonic flash.

The wolf also does not appear to me to be frightening away the woman entering through the window. Instead, his demeanour seems friendlier – he is sitting, his hackles are not raised and he is not baring his teeth. Rather he seems to be playfully smiling, welcoming the masked woman through the open window. Perhaps he is tamed rather than a wild animal. Stander argues that the cat-woman and wolf are the opposing elements of the elite and the barbaric, which are in this contrasting combination indicative of Surrealism's influence on Breytenbach, and which I would rather argue activates the image's affective power.

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[134] Alberti called paintings open windows in his 1435 treatise on perspectival painting, *De pictora*. He invokes the image of the window as an instructive substitute for the rectangularly shaped frame of a painting. As a visual metaphor the window functions to establish one image onto another, with the relation between images being, as Friedberg (2006: 12) explains "bidirectional: the window is like a painting (it frames an opening onto the world) and the painting is like a window (as a technique to construct perspective)".

This artwork's hypericonic reverberation is initiated precisely because this image self-reflexively thematises Surrealist 'poetic images' and artistic practice – combining bizarrely strange elements in a novel manner, and in appearance insinuating the Surrealist artistic method of collage. Furthermore, this painting encompasses the fundamental constituents of art theoretical aesthetics – the painting as open window, the figure of the artist-in-action portrayed in self-portrait, and with the direct gaze of the collaged face of Breytenbach addressing and actively engaging with the spectator, reverberating, for example with René Magritte's *La Clairvoyance* (Figure 13). The figure of Breytenbach's gaze from the painting, invites the reader-spectator's imaginative participation in the depiction, where the open window figures the painted work of art as well as the fantastic creatures from the surreal beyond entering our shared imagination.

Figure 28, *L' homme au miroir,* also incorporates the window and the mask, while bringing a new element – the mirror – into the mix. At first glance this mask recalls the *Commedia dell'arte* masks of Harlequin or Scaramouche, which incite their own hypericonic resonances. On closer inspection, however, the rectangular shaped frontal face-cover and bird-like beak appear more like an African mask, as does the mask worn by the female figure in *Autoportrait masqué.*

Masks have particular purposes in African societies, often functioning as potent vessels of spiritual power (Finley 1999: 13-14).[135] Masks are used in religious and ceremonial rituals, where they could represent animal spirits, such as the bird, or other mythological or totem-like beings. The *Komo Helmut mask*, for example, found among the Bamana tribe in Mali are believed to be repositories of great ritual power generated through the prescribed combinations of elemental matter, which means the mask also symbolises wisdom through their complex arrangement of materials (LaGamma 2000: 54-55).

The combination of the beaked mask and feathers in *L' homme au miroir* point towards the man personifying a bird, a "highly significant iconographic motif" in African art, for birds carry associations of both the sky and earth and are therefore seen as having supernatural powers (LaGamma 2000: 56). They are "divine mediators or messengers" (Holden 1991: 163-64), which means the masked figure might be seen as the intermediary between the

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[135] Across the vast continent of Africa, masks serve numerous and diverse functions, which is why one must be careful of generalising. I include some examples: the *Basinjom mask* of the Banyang people from Cameroon is characterised as a 'speaking mask', 'the one who never tells lies', and 'the one who tells and acts'. In comparison, the *Diviner's mask* of the Yombe from Angola plays a central role when prosecuting criminals (LaGamma 2000: 56-57). The Bamana tribe from Mali employ wooden masks to instruct boys and young men passing through initiation rites. The Senofu people from the Ivory Coast and the Makonde from Tanzania use masks during funerals and initiation ceremonies, and the Chokwe from Angola and the Baule from the Ivory Coast use masks during dances and celebrations (Danto et al. 1989: 40, 48, 50, 94).

spectator and the man in the mirror, adding to the drawing's self-reflexive hypericonic power.

The window motif, once more activates the notion of boundaries, thresholds and entrances, framing what is inside and outside. In contrast to *Autoportrait masqué,* where the window is evidently open, in *L' homme au miroir* it is unmistakably closed and the windowpanes are clearly visible. What is outside, and what is inside too, must remain there. Outside the closed window the distant figure of a bird in free flight is visible, evidently not allowed into the room where its avian presence is echoed by, or reincarnated in the strange bird-like, beaked and winged, as well as puppet-like figure of the masked man inside the room.

As a visual system the transparent window is markedly opposed to the reflective opacity of the mirror (Friedberg 2006: 15).[136] The title of this drawing of course refers directly to the man in the mirror, reiterated by the phrase "*L'homme au mirroir et à l'artichaut*", written just above frame of the drawn mirror. This poetic line plays on the title of the work and also references the artichoke on the table in front of the masked figure. A curious element to this drawing is the way the hand holding it, and the mirror itself, is turned. It appears as though the figure reflected in the mirror stands in the position of the spectator.

If the hand and the mirror were turned inward, meaning the gaze reveals the identity of the personage behind the avian mask, the circle would be closed and no hypericonic event would be set in motion. This is not the case, however, and it is consequently up to an imaginatively engaged spectator to attempt to discern the mysterious identity of the reflected face, to peel away the metaphorical layers to reach the heart of the artichoke, so to speak.

The gaze from the picture is turned outwards; somebody is being addressed from within or by the picture. The question provoked by the ambiguity of the reflection in the mirror asks, whose individual likeness, or portrait-like face, is reflected? Moreover, it is in this question which the drawing directs towards the spectator that initiates the hypericonic event. In comparison with *Autoportrait masque,* I do not believe this countenance to reflect Breytenbach's own. It is highly unlikely that this is a self-portrait, unless of course it is Breytenbach in disguise, once again wearing a mask, as artist-cum-first-spectator. Perhaps the man in the mirror is a contemporary acquaintance, or even a friend of Breytenbach? Breytenbach may perhaps even have drawn a citation of an artist's portrait, as an act of homage. Although these are all valid suppositions, it is my suggestion that the portrait in the mirror prefigures future spectators, and this brings about the drawing's hypericonic shock.

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[136] Alberti's window and Brunelleschi's mirror are two competing visual systems at the very root of perspectival theory (Friedberg 2006: 15).

In *L'homme au miroir,* the man in the mirror looks directly outward making eye contact with the spectator, also reflected in the mirror. The tenor of the appellative face reflected in the mirror appears in the poetic line: *L'homme au mirroir et à l'artichaut.* Breytenbach the poet asks that his poetry be read, as the poet-artist asks the same for his drawing, and activating the hypericonic dynamic. The dynamic, thus, is centred on Breytenbach's *imago*, both the living painter-poet and the imaginary *persona* of his poetry and paintings, spinning off from '*Die maer man met die groen trui'* (*Ysterkoei*) to all the fictional and poetic self-reflections imaginatively explored in his diverse writings and depictions.

To finish, I have shown that in the South African context, at some distance from Western artistic centres, at the edge of the First World, artists are at liberty to explore unique themes, or universal themes in a uniquely South African manner, also by juxtaposing European and African cultures. The clash of cultures exemplified by 'discovery' narratives, utilised by both Preller and Coetzee, are not unique to the South African context *per se*. I demonstrated, however, that both artists' reimagination of the events are novel and innovative, emphasising and calling attention to the African experience, above the European, venturing to recount 'discovery' from the indigenous point of view, and thereby instigating hypericonic dynamics. Preller also adapts and reacts to notions entrenched in Western iconography, like *tromp l'oeil* and curiosity cabinets in *Collected images*, however differentiating himself by exploring these themes from a decidedly (South) African perspective. Breytenbach, as the artist exemplifying the most explicit surrealist engagement, challenges, undermines, and destabilises cultural patterns in both the literary and visual artistic spheres, actively drawing on the subversive and anti-conventional in his artistic creations.

I showed how Preller, Coetzee, and Breytenbach's respective oeuvres display juxtaposed disparate worlds, creating imagery that is strange and like something seen in dreams, fusing incongruous elements – *naturalia* and *artificialia,* or like the chosen examples from Coetzee and Breytenbach, human and bird, to use only one example – into fantastical and strange 'surrealist poetic images'. Moreover, the same pervasive, fundamental imaginatively juxtaposed imbrications of colonial and indigenous cultures persist in the oeuvres of these three South African artists, becoming enduring and omnipresent ultimate juxtapositions of incongruent realities. It is in these typically South African juxtapositionings of disparate and incongruent realities that these artworks also affect their image powers, sparking the shocks of hypericonic events.

These 'surrealist images' have affective image power over spectators, and readers. Their purpose, I argue, is to be disconcerting so as to perturb, thereby frustrating participant spectators. Preller, Coetzee, and Breytenbach utilise these image powers to comment upon, and also to subvert and question the clashes of European-colonialist and indigenous-African

customs and traditions. As a critical and inquisitive art historical concept, hypericonic dynamics are effective and advantageous in engaging and participating with such artworks, since they create an imaginative space for dialogue and reaction. By opening the image domain through the emergent processes, actions and activities of artistic creation – whether tricking the spectator's eye, displaying curiosity and wonder, being sardonic and satirical, or directly addressing the spectator (or reader) – hypericonic dynamics allow for hermeneutic intersubjective appropriation, or distanciation, of 'poetic images' in the surrealist mode.

Figure 24. Alexis Preller, *Collected images (Orchestration of themes)* (1952)

Figure 25. Alexis Preller, *Discovery (of the Sea Route around Africa)* (1959-62)

Figure 26. Cyril Coetzee, *T'kama-Adamastor* (1999)

Figure 27. Breyten Breytenbach,
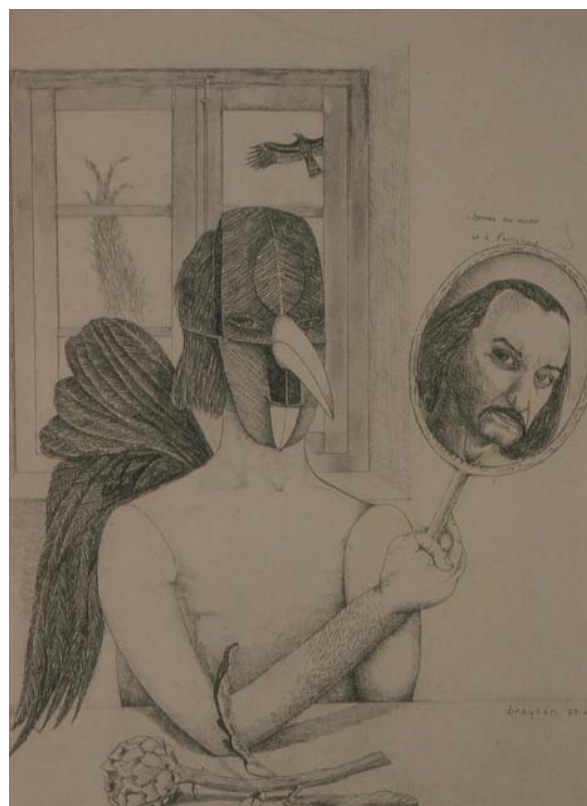*Autoportrait masqúe* (1990)

Figure 28. Breyten Breytenbach, *L' homme
au miroir* (1990)

Chapter 6: Conclusion

What remains then, is to determine what this thesis has accomplished and to reflect on its shortcomings, which could also point towards possible avenues of future research.

In this dissertation the French Surrealist movement functioned as stimulus to explore various facets of human imaging and imagining, in both the production and reception of art. In this regard Surrealism opened avenues for investigation of productive and shared human imagining as well as the consequences and repercussions of the movement after it experienced its decline – the movement's 'wake'. My particular approach utilised digital archiving, which also allowed me to develop a novel notion of 'hypericonic dynamics' as an interpretive tool of image hermeneutics.

I am in agreement with André Breton and Maurice Nadeau, who both maintained that the surrealist attitude or mind-set is timeless, and therefore, I assert, still endures today. The literary and artistic movement French Surrealism came into existence with the publication of André Breton's *First Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924. For a period of approximately two decades the movement flourished – from an outsider, fringe movement to one of the dominant avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century. However, with the outbreak of the Second World War the French movement experienced a steep decline as many members were exiled to North America.

However, certain actions and activities of the imagination, the practices of image creation and production, associated with Surrealism extend beyond the boundaries of the French movement. I referred to a cluster of women artists living and working in Latin-America after the Second World War who I situate, specifically, 'on the edge' of Surrealism. I also demonstrated that select South African artists can also be situated in the continuing wake of Surrealism. In fact, the South African artist-poet Breyten Breytenbach concedes his indetbness to French Surrealism in both the literary and artistic domains.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Surrealism did not have as significant a legacy or 'wake' in the South African context as it had in Latin-America. In the Mexican setting, I identified the cluster of women artists, although admittedly they also developed their own unique interests and concerns. It was possible for me to distinguish the Latin-American cluster since many of the women, while in Europe, had connections and relationships with male members of the French movement. However, no such links or associations existed among members of Surrealism and artists from South Africa. Indeed, Surrealism was introduced to South African audiences as a literary movement, rather than an artistic movement, after Afrikaans poets travelled to Paris. It is also necessary that I acknowledge that the sample in the South

African context is, relatively speaking, rather limited, and therefore a weakness of this exploration of Surrealism's heritage.

Although I purposefully also excluded African artists form this study, so as not to repeat the eurocentric mistakes of, for instance, William Rubin's *"Primitivism" in 20th century art: affinity of the tribal and the modern* (Rubin 1994) exhibition, I suggest that future research into possible surrealist tendencies in the art of, for example, Jackson Hlungwani or Johannes Phokela is conceivable. These artists' oeuvres also disclose Western and African cultural entanglements, in the mystical or picaresque modes respectively, yet from an African perspective.

I took advantage of Diego Rivera's unexpectedly playful *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* as a central artwork employed to tease out the key conceptual terms examined throughout this dissertation. I regard *Las tentaciones de San Antonio* as a painting of strategic importance since it can be situated in Surrealism's non-European wake, and consistent with the fictive typiconic holding patterns I associate with the movement.

The Surrealist conception of the 'poetic image' granted me the opportunity to explore the human ability to construct and compose elements in productive and original ways. It was the juxtapositionings of disparate worlds – depicted in surrealist 'poetic images' – which first revealed the ignited spark of the power of surrealist images and which therefore functioned as impetus for the development of the art historical interrogative device which I termed 'hypericonic dynamics'.

A distinctive facet illuminated by this research on Surrealist imaging and imagining is the significant, often unaware, subconscious, and involuntary functioning of the human imagination in daily life. By illustrating the advantage of utilising such unconscious and involuntary imaginative actions as automatism, dreaming, playing, improvising, intuiting, fictionalising, and fantasising, the Surrealists broadened my understanding of the crucial primary and supportive functions of the imagination in human life – the general and shared historical life of the imagination from which artists may launch their specialised imaginative projects, in works that require the imaginative cooperation of communities of spectators.

While investigating the imagination's diverse spontaneous as well as schooled operations as a shared human ability, I identified what one could perhaps call 'shared imagining communities' surrounding Surrealism, at work at different levels: the insider members of the French movement, the surrealist time-current encompassing artists, spectators and supporters among the art public, as well as particular typiconic fictive casts of the imagination – recurrent holding patterns and worldview framings, in this particular case the mystical and picaresque framings. I mainly limited my research to typiconic holding patterns

since this broadest level reveals the persistence and legacy of Surrealism. Although I engaged with the reverberations of the surrealist time-current by means of its geographical and temporal extension to Latin-America and South Africa, I propose that more research into these shared imagining communities is viable.

Likewise, the human shared imagining capacity operational within the particular domain of the fine arts, and described by such philosophers as Gaston Bachelard, Arnold Berleant, Lambert Zuidervaart, and Kendall Walton, also awaits further research.

In this study, I primarily conceived of French Surrealism as a cohesive and united movement, with like-minded members. In truth, the artists, critics, and spectators involved in the movement where caught up in restless cultural dynamics as combatants in style wars. Their relationships were not always one of loyalty, but often of enmity, where allegiances and fidelities simultaneously coexisted with prejudices and aversions. I pinpoint such animosities between members of the movement as revealed in declarations and assertions made by, to name only a few, Louis Aragon when he abandoned Surrealism for communism, Pierre Naville who questioned whether surrealist painting existed, and André Masson who felt increasingly alienated from the movement in the latter part of the 1920s.

Throughout this investigation I develop the concept of hypericonic dynamics as an interpretative tool of image hermeneutics. I expanded W.J.T. Mitchell's notion of 'hypericons', elaborating upon and developing the notion in conjunction with Dario Gamboni's conception of 'potential images', Michael Baxandall and Thierry du Duve's respective views on an artwork's implicit directive to be looked at, Paul Ricoeur's reflections regarding the power of images, and Joan Ramon Resina's notion of after-images.

Against the backdrop of Mitchell's literary investigations, primarily the illuminated poetry of William Blake, he originally conceived of the hypericon as a means of image analysis navigating the pictorial, figurative, and imaginative domains between the extremes of graphic and verbal images. Hence the case of Breyten Breytenbach is particularly pertinent at the conclusion of my investigation, as a relevant South African artist-poet who explores the word-image relationship in a distinctly surreal manner.

I conceive of hypericonic dynamics as an image-based means of image analysis. Therefore, the 'hypericonic analyses' I undertook in this study presented a device to move beyond the verbal domination of, for example, iconological analysis and interpretation in image hermeneutics. As an interpretive tool, rather than focusing on the intention of the artist, or on the reception of the artwork, hypericonic dynamics, as I conceive of the notion, as living image events, concentrates on the one hand, on the performative interaction between work-cum-image, and on the other hand, on imaginative spectator engagement.

I propose future research into the viability of hypericonic dynamics as a hermeneutic device, in a more general sense. In the space afforded by this thesis I have only briefly shown that the diversity of imaginative operations allows for nuanced hypericonic events. Several alternative dynamics are distinguishable than merely the 'tormenting', 'seductive', or 'shocking': the example from Masson's oeuvre, for instance, enacts its hypericonic dynamic through dizzying chance games, and Varo and Preller's works perform their hypericonic dynamics through wonder and curiosity. Since powerfully eventful hypericonic dynamics operate through the actions and activities of the imagination – in the acts of depicting, the activities of imagining, and the practices of figuring – its use as a method of spectator engagement can be broadened into the investigation of earlier as well as later art, beyond the special and singular focus on Surrealism.

Since my conception of hypericonic dynamics is an image-based artistic hermeneutics, I necessarily had to distinguish between the terms 'image' and 'picture', a further component of recent debates on image theory or continental *Bildwissenschaft*. The debate rages on as evidenced by Lambert Wiesing's *Sehen lassen: die Praxis des Zeigens* (2013), written in response to and in critique of Mitchell's notion of the image-picture distinction.[137] Wiesing critiques the notion of an image-as-picture as having the abilities of thinking, knowing, or reflecting; Wiesing refers to such self-aware or self-conscious images as mythical images.

Another shortcoming of my investigation relates to the archival approach which I employed. This implies that I was never in the 'face-to-face' presence of the key artworks to which I refer. I did not exploit any traditional art historical interpretive methods, or the so-called 'connoisseurship-method', as part of my image hermeneutics which took the current issues in image or visual theory as point of departure.

The archival approach I employed did, nevertheless, also have certain advantages. Firstly, it allowed me the opportunity to theoretically investigate the human imagination. Secondly, as an experimental method 'archival hermeneutics' also permits further research on the procedures and operations of digital archiving, including launching platforms for searching and finding items through tags, links and hyperlinks.

The cascade of images and after-images resonating with imaginary vividness in hypericonic dynamics are, in a sense, similar to the network of images found in a digital archive – one image leads involuntarily and spontaneously to the next. Hence, archives have their own dynamic, with hyperlinks almost evolving into hypericonics.

Any computer can be considered an archive. Reflecting on archives in an expanding sense, I realised that one can move systematically from a computer, to a network, and finally to the

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all-inclusive and ever-expanding Internet. I, however, specifically took advantage of the Department of Art History and Image studies' image archive, at the University of the Free State, to focus my inquiry. Nevertheless, developing an archival approach allowed me to 'play' with this widening and narrowing of focus. I propose that the image archive starts to function as, what could perhaps be termed, an 'image research portal', and therefore I suggest future research on such digital-archival image portals.

The use of a digital archive and archival hermeneutics afforded me the occasion to develop my concept of hypericonic dynamics as an interpretative tool of image hermeneutics. The digital archive presented the means by which I could link and relate artworks together in a spontaneous and original manner, which would have been impossible without the archival approach – by its very nature activating cascades of images and after-images. One of the benefits of exploiting this approach was the richer historical understanding it provided as well as giving me the benefit of a highly nuanced paradigm of image selection – yet another terrain opened for prospective research.

A particularly interesting motif which I found to recur in diverse works of art throughout this thesis is that of the bird. Such avian motifs appear as hybrid creatures in numerous depictions of the temptation of St Anthony, and it is a motif that appears in the oeuvre of various French Surrealists, including Max Ernst and René Magritte. Ernst in particular had an acknowledged fascination with birds. Hybrid bird figures persist in works from the cluster of women in Latin-America, with Varo specifically incorporating bird imagery, and the motif appears repeatedly in the South African context as well – both in the form of hybrid, creatures and as reference to indigenous-African masks, where such motifs carries its own unique potency.

Birds function as symbols of freedom, for their ability to soar through the sky. They also symbolise renewed life as well as eternal life. In the case of my thesis, birds figure the flights of the imagination in its imagining operations – in particular during the events of surprising movements and soaring trajectories of hypericonic dynamics.

Finally, I propose that the broadened reflections on the imagination, initiated by Surrealism, particularly also the unconscious and involuntary operations of human imagination, benefitted artistic practice in a general sense, beyond the specific confines of the Surrealist movement. Moreover, in an even more general sense, an expanded consideration of the imagination reveals the significant, although often unconscious, roles of the imagination in everyday human life. I understand the imagination to be irreducible, complex, elaborate, and multifaceted in its operations.

Like 'life' or 'language' or 'justice' the imagination is one of the defining basic qualities of human existence. The awareness of the unexpected yet ubiquitous presence of imagining in every concrete and practical human interaction with others in the world has been a key discovery in this exploration of the wake of Surrealism. It is my hope that this study will contribute to a new appreciation and reappraisal of the value of human imagining, even beyond the borders of the fine arts.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Depictions of the legend of the Temptation of St Anthony

Artist	Title	Important features of the apparitions	St Anthony's response
Cenni di Francesco di Ser Cenni (ca 1396-1415)	*Crowning of the Virgin* altarpiece (ca 1390)	St Anthony portrayed tormented by winged, horned, and claw-footed hybrid beasts, devils that torment him with burning canes and clubs. They are grotesque, but not particularly menacing − that there are six devils, and their striking colours, more than their size or their countenance, contributes to their prominence.	St Anthony is depicted laying on the ground, at the mercy of numerous devils.
Hieronymus Bosch (ca 1450-1516)	*De verzoeking van St Antonius* triptych (1500)	The left panel is filled with comically-grotesque and carnivalesque hybrid figures The central panel portrays the temptation scene proper. The scene is filled with all manner of demonic figures that are strange and grotesquely hybrid creatures that combine insects, mammals and fish. The right panel is a more seductive than tormenting scene, with naked women partaking in the Witches' Sabbath. Anthony's body faces this scene, but his face is turned to the spectator, in manner similar to the central panel.	St Anthony, a static figure around whom all the action occurs (in the central panel) defeats the demonic figures through prayer.
Pieter Bruegel (ca 1525-69)	*De verzoekingen van de heilige Antonius* (1556)	An enormous amputated head with creatures coming out of its deadened mouth, ear, and eyes dominate the engraving, which is also filled with diverse fantastical and comically-grotesque creatures. Some figures also evoke the carnivalesque lower body inversion.	St Anthony's back is turned on the scene − he is in prayer, making the sign of the cross and with a halo above his head.
Jacques Callot (1592-1635)	*La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1634-35)	A gigantic flying dragon beast, spewing flames, dominate the scene, which also includes smaller, yet be no means less menacing, flying reptiles.	St Anthony bravely battles the dragon-like and reptile apparitions.
Salvator Rosa (1615-73)	*Tentazioni di san Antonio* (ca 1645)	A fearsomely huge yet skeletally emaciated demon, with claws and a tail, towers over St Anthony, and is aided by smaller winged and horned hybrid creatures.	A heroic Anthony keeps the hybrid demon-beast at bay with a holy crucifix.

Lovis Corinth (1885-1925)	*Die Versuchung des heiligen Antonius (1897)*	Anthony is portrayed as an old man, surrounded by ten naked women, beguiling and enticing him to partake in forbidden fruits. They are not only seducing him with their naked bodies, but with meats, fruits, and wine as well. Completing the scene are numerous phantasms, found in the background, looking on from cadaverous faces.	Anthony, a look of utter panic in his eyes, does his utmost to resist the women.
Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904)	*La Tentation de Saint Antoine (1869).* Fantin-Latour painted four more versions in 1893, 1896, 1897, and 1904	Anthony is surrounded by dancing women, yet nothing is frightening, terrifying or alarming about the scene; no monstrous of grotesque creatures are depicted. Fantin-Latour's brushstrokes give the scene a fuzzy and vague, light and almost ephemeral appearance.	St Anthony is barely discernible in this idealised scene filled with dancing and wine-drinking.
Félicien Rops (1833-98)	*La Tentation de Saint Antoine (1878)*	One of the most erotic and sensual depictions of the legend. A naked woman is nailed to a cross, replacing the crucified Christ; the word 'Eros' appears over her head, with her long blond hair flowing in the wind. Skeletal 'cupids' fly around them, while a jester-reminiscent devil looks on.	St Anthony, in despair, even pulling at his hair, reads from a manuscript, trying to withstand the temptation.
Armand Niquille (1912-96)	*La tentation de saint Antoine (1942)*	Next to St Anthony is a woman with flowing hair, with a serene smile on her face. She does not seem comparable with the conventional seductress motif. The central figure, evoking a jester-figure with his head tilted, drinks red wine from a chalice. He is surrounded by two strange hybrid creatures, one birdlike and the other doglike. The right side of the painting shows a mass of writhing bodies ascending from a fiery pit.	St Anthony is in contemplative prayer, making the sign of the cross; his eyes are covered.

Summary

This thesis reports an exploration of various interrelated facets of human imaging and imagining using the literary and artistic movement, French Surrealism, as catalyst. The 'wake of Surrealism' – a vigil held at the movement's passing, as well as its aftereffects – indicates my primary focus on ideas concerning the imagination held by members of the Surrealist movement, which I trace further in selected artworks of a cluster of women surrealists active in Latin-America as well as select artists in the South African context.

The Surrealists desired a return to the sources of the poetic imagination, believing that the so-called 'unfettered imagination' of Surrealism has the capacity to create unknown worlds, or the potential to envision often startling and strange realities. Not only did members of Surrealism have a high regard for the imagination, they also emphasised particular involuntary actions and unconscious functions of the imagination, as evidenced in their use of the method of automatic writing, dreams, play, objective chance, alchemy and so-called primitivism.

In this investigation I follow digital-archival procedures rather than being in the physical presence of the artworks selected for interpretation. Responding to this limitation and to the current interest in image theory, I elaborate a method of art historical interrogation, based on the eventful and affective power of images. This exploration of the imagination into Surrealism's wake therefore also functions as a 'pilot study', to determine the viability of this approach to image hermeneutics. I appropriate and expand W.J.T. Mitchell's notion of 'hypericons' to develop the proposed concept of 'hypericonic dynamics'. The hypericonic dynamic transpires in 'hypericonic events', through the cooperative imaging and imagining eventfulness of the interaction between artist and spectator, mediated by artworks. The dynamic is especially prominent in artworks with a metapictorial tenor.

With hypericonic dynamics and metapictorial thematics as my heuristic method, I investigate artworks by three women surrealists – Frida Kahlo, Remedios Varo, and Leonora Carrington – living and working in Latin-America after the Second World War, and after the French Surrealist movement had already experienced its decline. Against the backdrop of indigenous visual culture their distinct individual styles are also related to Magical realism in the Latin-American literary context, a style which overlaps and intersects with Surrealism. I expand upon insights gained in investigating the women in Mexico, to determine whether select South African artists, Alexis Preller, Cyril Coetzee, and Breyten Breytenbach belong in the wake of Surrealism.

The central aim of my exploration of the imagination is to gain a deeper understanding of the everyday human imagination and its myriad operations in daily life, for the greater part

conducted below the threshold of consciousness. The imagination is a universal human function, shared by all, yet also operational at an individual level. It also performs a unique function of image creation in the specialised domain of the fine arts. I understand the imagination to be irreducible, while often working in a subconscious, involuntary, and supportive, but nevertheless primary manner in everyday human life.

Keywords:

Surrealism, imagination, image studies, *Bildwissenschaft*, metapictures, hypericons, 'power of images', 'hypericonic dynamics', St Anthony, women surrealists.

Opsomming

Hierdie verhandeling lewer verslag van 'n ondersoek na verskeie onderling verwante fasette van die menslike verbeelding en beeldvormingsvermoë, met behulp van 'n studie van die Franse Surrealisme as literêre en kuns-beweging. Die 'wake of Surrealism' – 'n nagwaak gehou by die beweging se afsterwe, sowel as die wyer uitkringende nagevolge in die volgstroom – dui my primêre fokus op idees aangaande die verbeelding wat lede van Surrealisme gehad het aan, wat verder ook aftrek vind in geselekteerde kunswerke van 'n groep vroue surrealiste in Latyns-Amerika, sowel as enkele gekose kunstenaars in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.

Die Surrealiste begeer om terug te keer na die bronne van die poëtiese verbeelding, aangesien die sogenaamde 'ongebonde verbeelding' van Surrealisme oor die vermoë beskik om ongekende wêrelde te skep, met die potensiaal om dikwels verrassende en vreemde realiteite te bedink. Naas 'n hoë agting vir die verbeelding het die lede van Surrealisme ook by uitstek die onwillekeurige optrede en onbewuste aksies van die verbeelding beklemtoon, soos ondermeer blyk uit hul voorliefde vir die metode van outomatisme, drome, spel, toeval, alchemie en die sogenaamde primitivisme.

In hierdie ondersoek volg ek 'n digitaal-argivale prosedure eerder as om in die fisiese teenwoordigheid te wees van die gekose kunswerke van interpretasie. In reaksie op hierdie beperking, asook weens die huidige belangstelling in beeldteorieë, ontwikkel ek 'n metode van kunshistoriese vraagstelling gebaseer op die affektiewe mag van beelde. Hierdie ondersoek van die verbeelding in 'the wake of Surrealism' funksioneer dus ook as 'n loodsstudie, om die lewensvatbaarheid van hierdie benadering tot beeldhermeneutiek te peil. Ek eien W.J.T. Mitchell se idee van 'hypericons' toe en verbreed die begrip om die voorgestelde konsep hiperikoniese dinamiek (hypericonic dynamics) te ontwikkel. Hierdie dinamiek tree na vore as hiperikoniese gebeure – as koöperatiewe verbeeldings- en na-

beeldings gebeure in die interaksie tussen kunstenaar en toeskouer, bemiddel deur kunswerke. Die dinamiek word veral gevind in werke met 'n metapikturale strekking.

Met die hiperikoniese dinamiek en metapikturale tematiek as heuristiek ondersoek ek enkele kunswerke van drie vrouesurrealiste. Frida Kahlo, Remedios Varo en Leonora Carrington woon en werk in Latyns-Amerika na die Tweede Wêreldoorlog en na die Franse Surrealisme reeds sy verval ervaar het. Teen die agtergrond van inheemse visuele kulture ontwikkel hul elk individuele style wat ook verwant is aan Magiese realisme in die Latynse-Amerikaanse literêre konteks, 'n styl wat soms ook met Surrealisme oorvleuel. Deur verder uit te brei op insigte wat ek verkry het tydens die ondersoek van die Latyns-Amerikaanse vroue, word gekose Suid-Afrikaanse kunstenaars, Alexis Preller, Cyril Coetzee, en Breyten Breytenbach ook ondersoek om te bepaal of hul tot die 'wake of Surrealism' gereken kan word.

Die sentrale doel van my ondersoek na die verbeelding is om 'n dieper begrip van die alledaagse menslike verbeelding en sy magdom funksies in die alledaaglikse lewe te verkry, veral ook in optredes onder die drumpel van bewussyn. Die verbeelding is 'n universele menslike funksie, deur almal gedeel, dog slegs werkend op 'n individuele vlak. Dit verrig ook 'n unieke funksie van beeldskepping in die gespesialiseerde terrein van die skone kunste. Ek verstaan die verbeelding as onherleibaar, wat dikwels op onbewuste, onwillekeurige, en ondersteunende, maar nogtans primêre wyses in die alledaagse menslike lewe funksioneer.