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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FINE ART PRINTMAKING

**- DISCREDITING REALITY -
THE PARANOIAC-CRITICAL METHOD
OF SALVADOR DALI**

by

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Introduction

I believe that the moment is at hand when,
by a paranoiac and active advance of the mind,
it will be possible (simultaneously with
automatism and other passive states) to
systematize confusion and thus to help to
discredit completely the world of reality.
(Dali, 1930, quoted in Lippard, 1970, p.97)

Here we have an example of how Salvador Dali first began to discuss his new method of paranoiac-critical activity. This first piece was published in Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution in July 1930, the article being L'Ane Pourri (The Rotten Donkey). He discussed his paranoiac-critical activity by relating the term paranoia to surrealist theory. Throughout this thesis, I intend to explore Dali's paranoiac-critical activity in detail.

André Breton, the founder of Surrealism, has told us how:

Dali has endowed Surrealism with an instrument of primary importance, specifically the paranoiac-critical method, which has immediately shown itself capable of being applied with equal success to painting, poetry, cinema, to the construction of typical Surrealist objects, to fashions, to sculpture and even, if necessary, to all manner of exegesis.
(Breton, 1978, p.136)

At a time when Surrealism was skidding towards academicism, Dali was the man who invented critical paranoia, which in turn allowed us to start entering into his world of an erotic subconscious and paranoiac universe.

In order to examine Dali's paranoiac-critical method, we must first of all consider the word paranoia. In The Oxford Companion to the Mind, the basic definition of paranoia is that of a diagnosis used to describe patients who exhibit systematized delusions of grandeur and persecution. Its original meaning was "being out of one's mind". Heinroth in 1818 equated paranoia with madness. It was Kahlbaum in 1863 who gave it its modern meaning. He regarded paranoia as a persistent chronic condition, but also believed that paranoid patients suffered from a disorder of intellect. Paranoia survives as the name given to one type of functional psychosis, in which the patient holds a coherent, internally consistent, delusional system of beliefs, these beliefs being that he or she is a person of great importance and is on

that account being persecuted, despised and rejected. It would appear that through using the term paranoiac-critical method, Dali is involved in a constant analytical evaluation of paranoia throughout his work.

Dali defined his paranoiac-critical method as a form of irrational knowledge that is based on a delirium of interpretation. If one should try to define this method, at its simplest it would come down to the ability of the artist to perceive different images within a given configuration. Now, one might think that this method at its simplest is not very new. For example, if we think back to Leonardo da Vinci, he had a practice of gazing at the stains on old walls, at clouds, ashes or streams, out of which he could create fantastic scenes of battles or landscapes. One may come even closer to Dali's time and think of Max Ernst and his technique, stemming from Leonardo's, his kind of visionary irritation which consisted of making rubbings from a textured surface and then interpreting images in the rubbings. Where Dali differs, however, is that his way of gaining knowledge of these now illogical images perceived from the given configuration is, as one can see from the name he has given it, "based on a delirium of interpretation". He gains his irrational knowledge through a paranoiac analytical evaluation in an acutely disordered state of mind, which he deliberately sets out to simulate. Dali wanted a Surrealist work that could offer a consistent interpretation of an irrational subject. The paranoiac-critical method was setting out to establish this, an indestructible assembly of exact details. As Dali told us:

My whole ambition in painting is to manifest the images of concrete irrationality in terms of authoritative precision images which, for the moment, can neither be explained nor reduced by logical systems or rational approaches. (Dali, 1935, quoted in Descharnes, 1994, p.265)

Dali's practice of paranoiac-criticism drew on his interest in psychoanalysis and demonstrated in a more general way the relationship between perception and mental states. Dali partook in extensive readings of Freud and psychoanalysis and consequently found visual equivalents for this material. It was Dali's work that led Freud to think that perhaps the Surrealists weren't such complete fools. For Dali, meeting Freud was like meeting God. Julien Green¹ noted in his diary on one occasion that Dali had spoken of Freud

¹Julien Green was one of Dali's earliest collectors. The occasional observations Green makes in his diary with regard to Dali are always very intelligent. He asked Dali if his life had been simplified by reading Freud, whom he so admired. Dali answered that it was through Freud's books that he had been able to solve many of his own person conflicts.

".....as a Christian would speak of the Apostles". (Secrest, 1986, p.150). Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis and his theories were instrumental in forming modern concepts of human nature and human motivation. His writings on dreams and the unconscious changed traditional ideas about the origins of visual imagery and added a new dimension to the problems of its interpretation. The first Surrealist manifesto pays homage to Freud for his exploration of the human mind, thanks to which not only were hidden areas of the human psyche revealed, but also mechanisms for reaching them. The dream, whose direct connection with the unconscious is explored in Freud's Interpretation of Dreams and the monologue obtained from the patient under analysis, Freud's stress on the importance of the dream and the free, unconstrained monologue as routes to the unconscious, provided models for the two main streams of Surrealist activity.

The richest common ground between Dali and the Surrealists was provided by their mutual interest in psychology and psychoanalysis. Both leaned heavily on Freudian theory. What worried the Surrealists in particular was the chance they felt Dali had of turning his paintings into mere psycho-pathological documents. However, in The Dali Case (1936), Breton describes Dali's use of painting or any other medium as a means of escaping repressive constraints which would lead to psychosis.

His great originality lies in the fact that he has shown himself strong enough to participate in these events as actor and spectator simultaneously, that he has succeeded in establishing himself both as judge of and party to the action instituted by pleasure against reality. This constitutes the paranoiac-critical activity.....
(Breton, 1936, quoted in Ades, 1982, p.120)

He then discusses Dali's paranoia in Krapelin's terminology as isolated levels of delirium

Dali's first rate intelligence excels at reconnecting these levels to each other immediately after the event, and at gradually rationalizing the distance travelled. The primary material of his work is furnished by the visionary experiences, the meaningful falsifications of memory, the illicit ultra-subjective interpretations which compose the clinical picture of paranoia, but which to him present a precious lode to be mined.
(Breton, 1936, quoted in Ades 1982, p.120)

André Breton had to admit that Dali's paranoiac-critical method had provided Surrealism with "an instrument of primary importance" (Breton, 1978, p.136) Even André Thuron, who was one of the dogmatic hard-liners of the group, felt that what Dali had contributed to the group was extremely important: ".....to the life of the group and evolution of its ideology". (Descharnes, 1994, p.265).

One of the most influential modern writers on paranoia, Jacques Lacan, published some of his earliest work in the Surrealist review Minotaure; The Problem of Style and the Psychiatric Conception of the Paranoiac Forms of Experience appeared immediately after Dali's 1933 essay Paranoiac-Critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus. An even earlier text (1931) by Lacan and others on paranoia, commented on the extraordinary degree of autonomy in Surrealists automatic writing, like L'Immacule, Conception and its real similarity to the writings of the insane.

Lacan took a particular interest in the work of Salvador Dali. When he read Dali's article L'Ane Pourri (1930), his interest grew. It was soon afterwards that Dali received a phone-call from the young psychiatrist, eager to discuss his theories with Dali. As far as paranoia was concerned, the two men were to find that they had much in common. In fact, Lacan's and Dali's names have become inseparable from the history of paranoia, each finding the other's work a major support to his own.

So let us delve into the erotic subconscious and paranoiac universe of Salvador Dali and with the help of Freud and Lacan, explore in detail the paranoiac-critical method.

Chapter 1

What is Surrealism? Where was it born? What is it about? Why did a non-conformist like Dali become attracted to such a movement? What or who is the driving force behind Dali? Where does the paranoiac-critical method come from? Most importantly, what is the paranoiac-critical method? These are just some of the questions we may now be asking ourselves. The answers to such questions will lay the foundations and allow us to explore the paranoiac-critical method in detail.

Surrealism was founded in Paris. October 1924 was marked by André Breton's Manifesto du Surréalisme, a rigorous critique of Western society on the grounds of its excessive rationalism and materialism. The increasingly wide spread of Sigmund Freud's theories since the early years of the twentieth century has, without doubt, affected the conditions of life in our society. I am talking about one theory in particular, his theory of the unconscious. Freud tells us that our behaviour is substantially governed by mental processes of which we, in our society, are not aware. The influence of Freud on Surrealism and indeed on Dali was absolutely fundamental. It was not surprising that a major art movement such as Surrealism should emerge inspired by such ideas. As André Breton stated:

.....we must give thanks to the discoveries of Sigmund Freud. On the basis of these discoveries, a current of opinion is finally forming by means of which the human explorer will be able to carry his investigations much further. The imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights. If the depths of the mind contain within it strange forces, capable of augmenting those on the surface, or of waging a victorious battle against them, there is every reason to seize them, then if need be to submit them to the control of our reason.

(Breton, 1924, quoted in Lippard, 1970, p.12)

This was the Surrealist agenda, to tap the creative and imaginative forces of the mind at their source in the unconscious and through the increase in self-knowledge achieved through confronting people with their real nature, to change society. Surrealism had been defined "once and for all" in the 1924 Manifesto:

Surrealism: Pure psychic automatism by which it is proposed to express, either verbally, in writing, or in any other way, the real function of thought.
(Breton, 1978, p.136)

It was in 1929 that Dali joined the Surrealist group. 1929 was a crucial year for Dali. He moved to the centre of the European avant-garde. Now, being a member of the surrealist group, he was at the heart of activities in Paris, attending café, meetings and sessions in the apartment of André Breton. It was the year that Dali freed himself of all restraints and surrendered himself to his own personal universe. For Dali from his earliest childhood found more of a reality in the dream world than in reality itself. In his *Secret Life*, he tells us how "....later it has often become impossible for me to know where reality begins and imaginary ends" (Dali, 1942, p.38). He also lets us know how he lived in a ".....kind of waking dream" (Dali, 1942, p.38). The Surrealist theories he was about to explore finally gave him an opportunity to concentrate on the world of the imagination.

1929 was the year a decisive change took place in Dali's painting. For example, The First Days of Spring and Dismal Sport show a new confidence and clarification of theories lurking in his work of 1928. Dali had discovered a way of using his extensive reading in psychoanalytical textbooks and finding visual equivalents for that material, combining it with personal imagery that appeared in his earlier work. He was in a state of high mental excitement, bordering on hysteria, finding himself in sudden fits of violent laughter provoked by his imagination or for no reason at all.

From hour to hour my fits of laughter grew more violent and I caught in passing certain glances and certain whisperings about me by which I learned in spite of myself the anxiety which my state was beginning to cause. This appeared to me as comical as everything else, for I knew perfectly well that I was laughing because of the images that came into my mind....(Ades, 1982, pp.70-71)

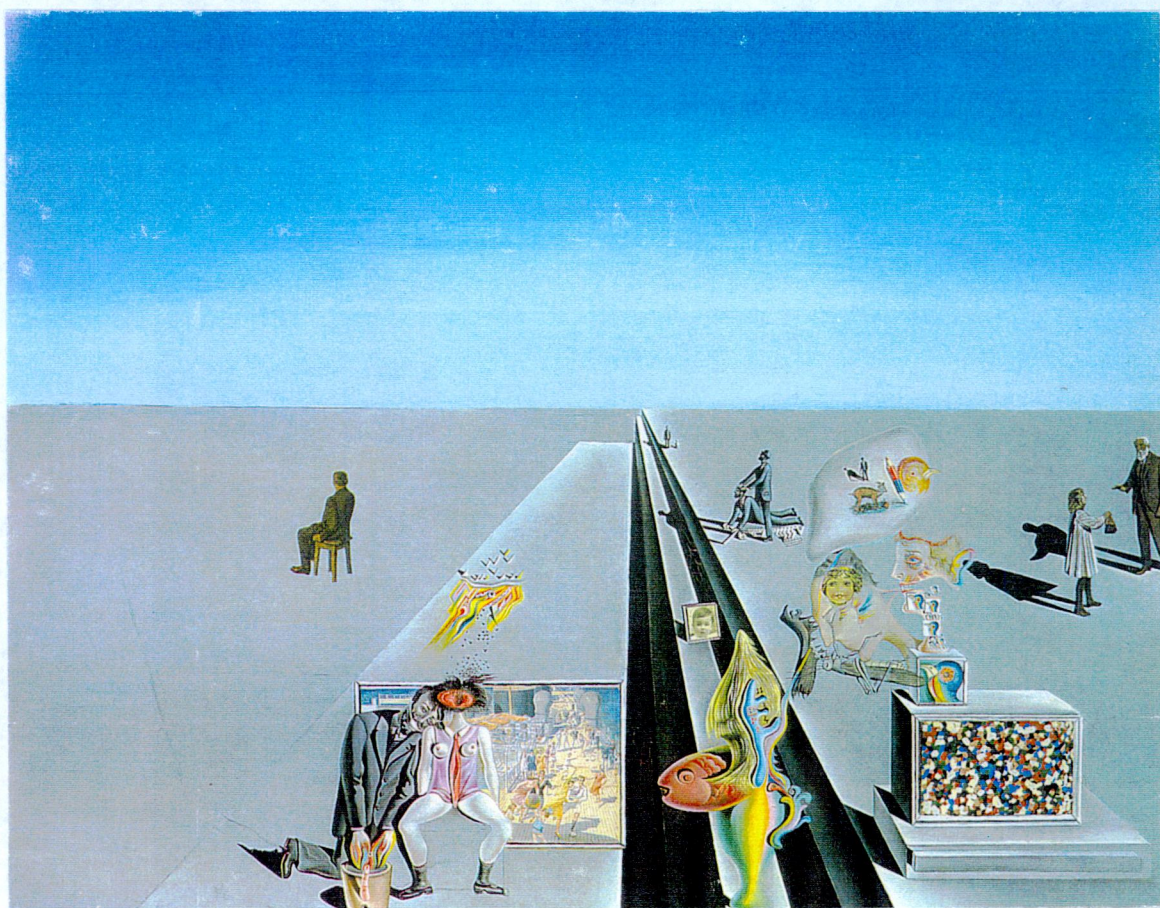
Dali was not absorbed in his work, including in it images which he couldn't ".....localise precisely in time or space, but which I knew with certainty I had seen when I was little" (Ades, 1982, p.71). Either separately or as a composite image, these images he had seen in his youth would appear. For example, Dali's association of the fish and the grasshopper is one of the first instances where we find him pursuing obsessively an image which inspired him with horror. In his Secret Life, he exclaims about the grasshopper, the "loathsome insect": "Horror nightmare, martyrizer and hallucinating folly of Salvador Dali's life" (Dali, 1968, p.128). He then tells of the fish he caught, the "slobberer". He squeezed it in his hand to prevent it from slipping away. Its head emerged from Dali's hand and as Dali examined it, he ".....uttered a shrill cry of terror and threw the fish far away....". To his horror, the face of the "slobberer" was exactly the same as that of the grasshopper! (Dali, 1948, p.129). The grasshopper may be seen in The First Days of Spring, fastened to the mouth of the young man's head. Perhaps it is the head of Dali himself. In fastening itself to this young man's mouth, the grasshopper signifies a threat that is half-cannibalistic and half-sexual in nature. It is an image of horror which may be found repeated in Dismal Sport and The Great Masturbator.

1929 was also the year that Dali found love. He fell in love with Gala Eluard, marking the birth of a legendary couple, for Gala was to become Dali's lifelong companion. She was also a great inspiration for his work, charging him with strength. As Dali himself resolved, she was practically his twin.

Dali's impact on Surrealism is exceptional. He seems to be an extremist even in a group whose fundamental doctrine was one of extremism. He adopted the phrase "more Surrealist than the Surrealists", dealing with areas of the unconscious where his colleagues feared to tread. Bringing the public face to face with the unconscious for the first time was bound to produce a shock. Surrealists knew this, it was their deliberate intention. In his article L'Ane Pourri, Dali wrote that:

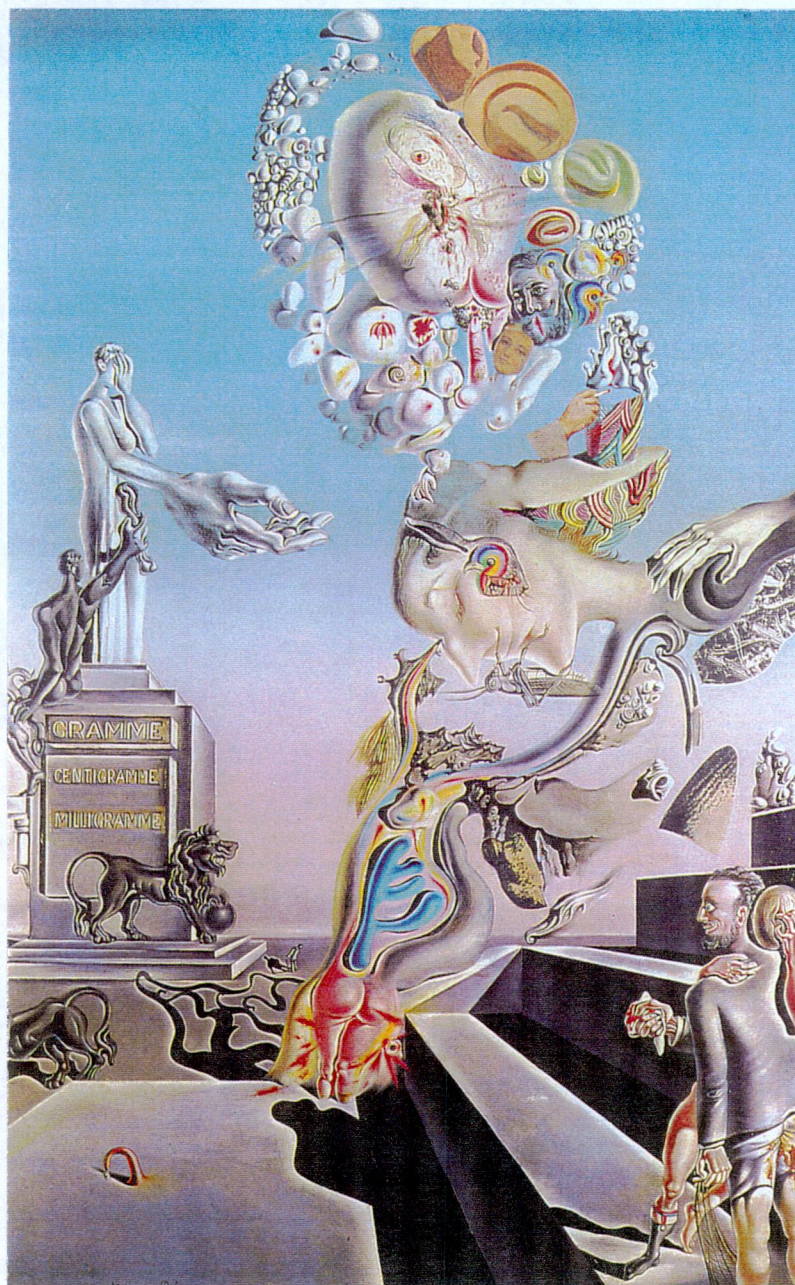
It has to be said, once and for all, to art critics, artists etc. that they need expect nothing from the new Surrealist images but disappointment, distaste and repulsion.
(Dali, 1930, quoted in Lippard, 1970, p.100)

As we already know, it was also in this article that Dali hints at his paranoiac-critical method.



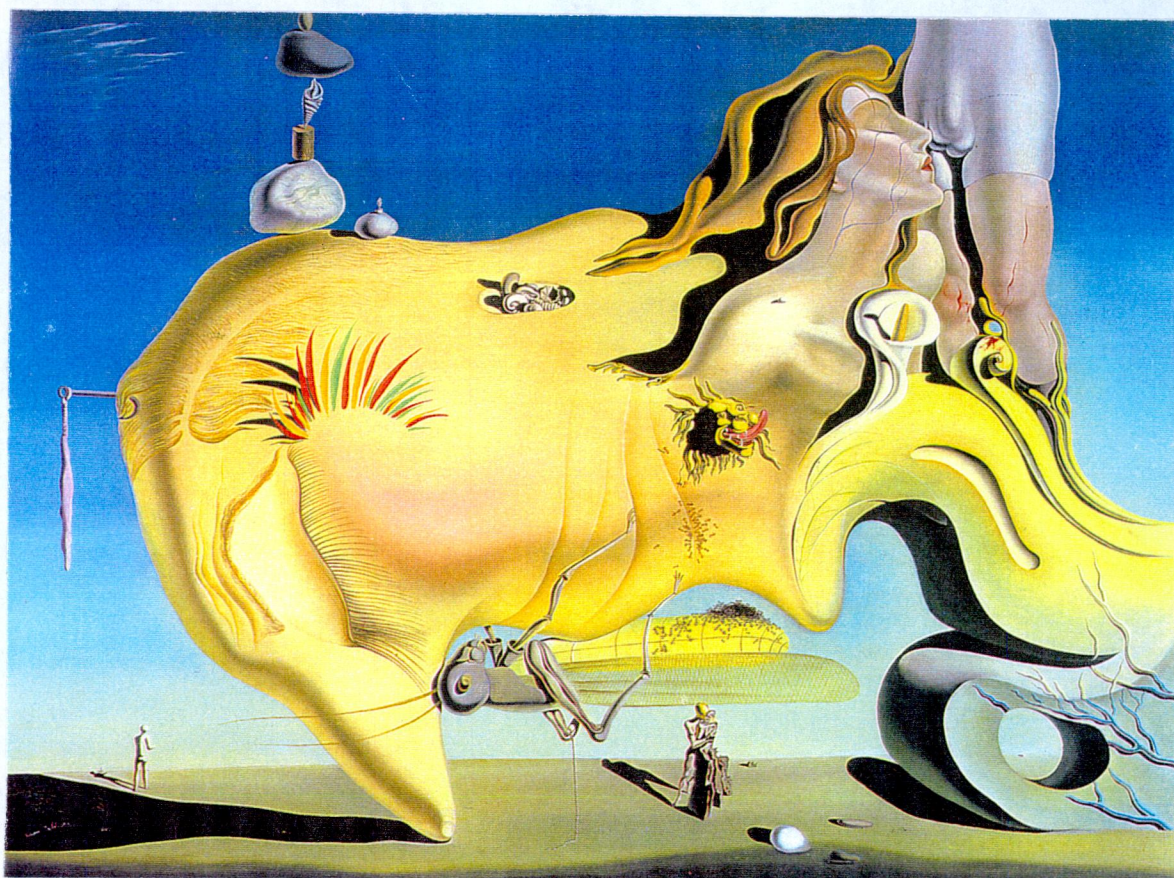
1. The First Days of Spring, 1929
Oil and collage on panel, 49.5 x 64 cm
St. Petersburg, The Salvador Dali Museum,
on loan from E. and A. Reynolds Morse





2. Dismal Sport
Oil and collage on canvas 31 x 41 cm
Private collection





3. The Great Masturbator, 1929
Oil on Canvas, 110 x 150 cm
Madrid, Museo Nacional Reina Sofía,
Gift of Dalí to the Spanish State



Paranoiac-criticism was conceived right from the beginning of Dali's association with the Surrealist movement. Even before L'Ane Pourri in March 1930 in his lecture Moral Position of Surrealism, Dali refers to the "ruining and discrediting of the world as perceived by the senses and the intellect" through the agency of our "violently paranoiac will to systematize confusion" (Finkelstein, 1996, p181). It is, of course, in L'Ane Pourri that he clearly shows his intentions when he tells us how very soon it will be possible, by using the mind of a paranoiac alongside Surrealists theories, to "systematize confusion" (Lippard, 1970, p.97) and therefore demolish reality. To Dali, there is a difference between paranoia and hallucination; paranoia is an active mental state of mind, hallucination is a passive state.

Perhaps now is a good time to come back to the definition of the word "paranoia"². Paranoia, as already mentioned, is a diagnosis used to describe patients who show systematized delusions of grandeur and an irrational obsessive fear that others are scheming against them. These delusions develop slowly into a complex, intricate and logically elaborated system, without any hallucination or general personality disorganization. True paranoia is fortunately rare, as it has a bad prognosis and is not responsive to any known treatment. However, despite being rare, it is of great interest and importance for a number of reasons.

Firstly, symptoms of paranoia occur in other psychoses. If we take schizophrenia for example, paranoid symptoms form part of a clinical picture that includes hallucinations, emotional withdrawal and autistic thinking. These are three classes of symptom which are conspicuous by their absence in true paranoia. Most textbooks of psychiatry will list "paranoid schizophrenia" as one of the three varieties of schizophrenia.

Secondly, people who are not regarded as mentally ill, who don't come under the care of psychiatrists, have personality traits which are nowadays described as paranoid. According to classical psychoanalytical theory, paranoia and paranoid traits generally are narcissistic disorders. These traits indicate a fixation at some infantile stage of development, during which the self is its own love object. However, many contemporary analysts feel that narcissistic self-overestimation is a way of compensating for humiliation occurring in infancy and childhood. The later research of Schatzman in 1973 has shown that Daniel Paul Schreber (1842 - 1911), the subject of Freud's classic paper Psycho-analytical Notes on an Autobiographical Account of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides) (1911), was from birth under mechanical restraint by his

² See basic definition of paranoia P.4

father, who made sure his son did not develop any signs of self will. Freud did not take into account Schreber's childhood. Instead, he took Schreber's expressed devotion to his son at face value. Freud interpreted Schreber's delusions of being persecuted by God as a reversal and projection of repressed homosexual longings for his father.

Thirdly, paranoiac delusions hold an embarrassing resemblance to the beliefs held and proclaimed by religious founders, political leaders and some artists. Such people may be found making claims on behalf of themselves, their religious ideas, their art or their country. It seems there may be some as yet unformulated relationship between the psychology of paranoia and that of leaders, preachers and artists.³

Fourthly, the adjective "paranoid" is sometimes used by psychoanalysts to describe anxiety and ideas that are inferred to be projections of the subject's own impulses. For example, a person unaware of his own hostility may suffer from "paranoid anxiety", imagining everyone is hostile towards him/her. Another example would be if a man is not aware of his own homosexual tendencies and has the "paranoid idea" that other men are always about to make a pass at him. Using the adjective "paranoid" in this way derives from Freud's idea that the psychology of paranoia hinges on reversal and projection of unconscious homosexual impulses.

Dali was to proceed to develop his own unique paranoiac phenomenon. He notes the distinction between the paranoiac delusion and simple hallucination. For Dali, there is a crucial difference between paranoia and hallucination. Paranoia is of a more voluntary nature, which is an active rather than passive mental state. He states that the paranoiac activity "always employs controllable and recognisable materials", that are found in the external world:

Paranoia uses the external world in order to assert its dominating idea and has the disturbing characteristic of making others accept this idea's reality.
(Dali, 1930, quoted in Lippard, 1970, p.98)

³ In Alan Bosquet's book *Conversations with Dali*, Dali exclaims "I am a supreme swine. The symbol of perfection is a pig". (Bosquet, New York, 1969 p.11). He also exclaims "I am the divine Dali" (Bosquet, New York, 1969, p.15)

His basic aim at this point was to systematize confusion, to have a plan or order for elements taken in the external world that would otherwise be unrelated to each other and, therefore, turn the world of reality upside down. In the special Surrealist Intervention 34 under the title Philosophic Provocations, Dali presents us with his own definitions:

Paranoia: Delirium of interpretation bearing a systematic structure.

Paranoiac-Critical activity: Spontaneous method of 'irrational knowledge' based on the critical and systematic objectification of delirious associations and interpretations.

Painting: Handmade colour 'photography' of 'concrete irrationality' and the imaginative world in general.
(Dali quoted in Breton, 1978, pp.136-7)

Perhaps if we look at the concept of the double image, we may see the paranoiac process in more approachable terms. A good example of the double image is the several versions of the painting Invisible Sleeping Woman Horse, Lion created in 1930. A double image is born in a paranoiac thought process reflecting some obsessive idea. It is a function of the individual's paranoiac capacity. Interpretation can go on indefinitely. Dali doesn't want to passively dream, but rather to systematize his confusion out of a given image conjuring up another image and so on - what Breton called our "willful hallucination". This illustrates for us the essential nature of the paranoiac process. Dali's overall outlook was to completely discredit reality. He wanted to make his thoughts, all that passed through his mind be it personal, ridiculous or incomprehensible, into concrete visions for the public.

While in America, he gave a lecture with slide projections of Surrealist works, under the title Surrealist Paintings and Paranoiac Images, at the Museum of Modern Art on January 11, 1935. It was here that Dali pinpointed the rôle of the subconscious in his images. Dali tells us how "The fact that I myself do not understand the meaning of my paintings at the time that I am painting them, does not mean that I have no meaning" (Deschames, 1989, p.153). For as the paranoiac-critical method grew it became more complex.

In The Conquest of the Irrational (1935), probably the most accessible account of paranoiac-criticism, Dali now maintains that his images of concrete irrationality are "authentically unknown images". He sees them as "inexplicable and irreducible, either by systems of logical intuition or by rational mechanisms" (Dali, 1935, quoted in Bosquet, 1966, p.114). On the contrary, these new images of concrete irrationality, according to Dali,

...tend toward their real and physical
'possibility': they go beyond the domain
of phantasms and 'virtual' psycho-
analyzable representations.
(Dali, 1935, quoted in Bosquet, 1966, p.114)

Dali insists that these new images defy interpretation (psychoanalytical or other) and tend to appear as concrete manifestations of reality.

We may now begin to explore the paranoiac-critical method in more detail. Freud, as we have seen, had a huge impact on Surrealism and Dali in particular, laying the foundations for their theories. Lacan also had a huge part to play in Dali's concept and theory of paranoiac-criticism. At this point, it is appropriate to explain the influence of these men on Dali to help us further our understanding on the paranoiac-critical method in Dali.

Chapter 2

Salvador Dali had a great interest in psychoanalysis. It was from this interest that he drew his practice of the paranoiac-critical method. The word psychoanalysis, strictly speaking, refers solely to the theories of Freud and method of psychotherapy and investigation based thereon. Basically, psychoanalysis is a specialized form of psychotherapy which relies on the interpretation, or analysis, of what a patient says or omits to say, while freely associating under instruction to report his thoughts without reservation. This was recognised by Alfred Adler who, on breaking with Freud, gave his school the name of "Individual Psychology" and by C.G. Jung, who used the title "Analytical Psychology" in similar circumstances. More recently the word psychoanalysis is used loosely to describe the schools of thought which took their origin from the work of Freud, however much they diverge from it now. The theories of Fromm, Harney, Sullivan and others are classified as "Neo-Freudian", in spite of the fact that they bear very little resemblance to the original.

Freud's method of psychoanalysis introduced the concepts of unconscious ideas, ideas inadmissible to consciousness and the splitting of the mind. He immediately applied his new method to the study of dreams and published in 1900 an account of his analysis of his own dreams in The Interpretation of Dreams, which he came to regard as his most important book. It presented the concepts that became the essence of a comprehensive theory of mental life: the meaningfulness of seemingly chaotic and absurd mental activity, wish-fulfilment, the Oedipus Complex, infantile sexuality, regression, the Unconscious, resistance, repression, defence, projection and symbolism, as well as the similarities of dreams and mental disorders. The dream, as Freud himself put it, is

the royal way to the understanding of the unconscious and a creative act in which the average person demonstrates creative powers of whose existence he has no idea when he is awake. (Bowmews, 1980, p11)

Dali first read Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams when he was a student in Madrid. It undoubtedly had a huge influence on his thought as he wrote:

This book presented itself to me as one of the capital discoveries in my life and I was seized with a real vice of self-interpretation not only of my dreams but of everything that happened to me however accidental it might seem at first glance.
(Dali, 1942, p.167)

Dali stresses the fact that many of the images that surfaced were very closely related to childhood memories and associations as an aid to analysis, for they were often crucial to the unravelling of the latent content (dream thought) of a dream. As he explains:

It was during my childhood that all the archetypes of my personality, my work and my ideas were born. The inventor of these psychological materials is therefore essential.
(Dali, quoted in Secrest, 1986, p.20)

Dali was unquestionably familiar with Freudian theory as we see in his manipulation of it. He would have read a few of Freud's other works which had been translated into French (Three Essays - translated 1923, Beyond The Pleasure Principle - translated 1927, Leonardo - translated 1927, The Ego and the Id - translated 1927). In 1930, in a lecture in Barcelona, Dali began his pursuit of libidinal pleasure overriding reality. He described the Surrealists' moral position in terms of a struggle between the reality principle and the pleasure principle, arguing: "the desperate interdiction imposed on anything found outside the domain of ignoble humanitarian sentiments.....on which we crap", would lead to the declaration of the pleasure principle through ".....masturbation, exhibitionism, crime and love....." (Finkelstein, 1996, p128). Dali found his theoretical justification in Freud. In his lecture The Moral Position for Surrealism and article L'Ane Pourri, he warns us about Freud's mechanisms, as they would not be in any way favourable or comforting to society. The new Surrealist images which contribute to the destruction of reality are, according to Dali, leading us "beyond infamous and abominable ideals of all kinds, aesthetic, humanitarian, philosophical" to a "Surrealist revolution" that is "above all else a revolution of moral order" (Finkelstein, 1996, p128).

Freud's influence on Dali is absolutely crucial to the birth of paranoiac-criticism. The reading of Freud inspired Dali to examine his own psychic life. He set out as a Surrealist to examine

his own mind, his sexual and emotional life, his dreams and fears, his conscious and subconscious, in relation to Freudian theory. In doing this, he began to free himself of an angst-ridden psychic reality. Dali's method of examining his mind lay in two main Freudian theories, perversion and the regression of the libido. The words "perversion" or "pervert" are commonly thought of in the sense of diverting or turning away from the norm or normally right. They appeared frequently in Dali's writings or public statements. In his article Objets Surrealistes 1931, he declared that man's "true spiritual culture" was a function of his "capacity for perverting his thought" (Finkelstein, 1996, p129). Dali was in a sense teaching himself to free his mind of the norm, although still being aware of it. To be successful in doing this, to the extent that Dali did, we must admit is quite a feat. For this allowed him to be spontaneous in his thought and thereby let his irrational images flow. He could then associate and interpret them in a disordered state of mind and methodically present them as objects of perception. So thanks to Freud, Dali learned how to set his mind free and in a sense lose control. However, it is very important to note that when Dali got into this "state", it was in a sense controlled and therefore critical. As Dali proclaimed, the only difference between his mind and the mind of a madman was that he was not mad. This is why I believe that the paranoiac-critical method owes its birth to Freud, for it was in Freudian theory that Dali found the basis for his own.

The work of Jacques Lacan also had a very important influence on Dali's paranoiac-critical method. Lacan obtained his Diploma in Forensic Medicine in 1932. He finished his studies under Professor Claud at the Medical Faculty in Paris. True psychiatric knowledge was Lacan's special field. He had read in this area but, most importantly, he held a rich classical experience by talking and listening to his patients. His knowledge had been tested against the realities of life, in the other world of the asylums. Lacan was socially and intellectually much involved with the poetic and artistic circles of the Surrealists, whose impact is reflected in his work. He was fascinated by the Surrealists and their automatic writing, dream exploration and the plunge into the depths of the unconscious. Lacan, like the Surrealists, was a follower of Freud.

Within the Surrealists, Lacan took particular note of the work of Dali and his ideas on the subject of paranoia. It was in his article L'Ane Pourri that Dali told us how his paranoiac-critical method sprang from ".....the violence of paranoiac thought"(Lippard, 1970, p98). Paranoiac thought was a phenomenon for Dali which raised a whole set of problems.

When Lacan read this article, he at once asked for an appointment and called on Dali in his Paris studio on Rue Gauget. These two uncommon personalities had been drawn together by paranoia. Dali says they talked for over two hours and in that time met with few points of disagreement.

In 1932, Lacan's thesis was published by Le Français, the title being On Paranoiac Psychosis in its relations with the Personality. It was in this thesis that Dali found full corroboration of his ideas. Lacan's thesis also provided Dali with the theoretical tools which he needed to reject the classical conception of paranoia. As Lacan argued, the classical conception of paranoia "sees the interpretation as a reasoning misrepresentation, based on constitutional elements of the mind"(Lacan, 1932, quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p297). Lacan, on the contrary, asserted that his conception accounts for

the frequent cases where this presumed constitutional factor patently fails to appear and where it is impossible to grasp, in the origin of the delirium, the least act of delirious reasoning or induction.
(Lacan, 1932, quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p.297)

Lacan's method was adopted from the idea that inspiration was achieved from the logic of a phenomenon or event which was in a manner that the living experience of the patient was considered absolute. Therefore, there was a presence within the delusion of forms and structures of development which could be observed empirically through experiment. Dali similarly saw the paranoiac mechanism as a force and power acting at the base of the phenomenon of personality.

In 1933, Lacan's essay Le Problème du Style et la conception psychiatrique des formes paranoïaques de l'expérience appeared accompanying an essay of Dali's in the first issue of the Surrealist-oriented magazine Minotaure. Lacan talks of the forms of symbolic expression typical of paranoia, noting how we have

.....characterized the symbols by a fundamental tendency which we have designated by the term 'iterative identification of the object': the delirium is found to be very rich in phantasms of cyclical repetition, ubiquitous multiplications, endless periodic recurrences of the same events, doublings and triplings of the same persons and, occasionally, hallucinations of doubling of the subject's own self. (Lacan, 1933, pp.68-9, quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p.19)

This description can be applied to Dali's paintings of the 1920s - 1930s, with their repetition of motifs and situations. They hold meaning for Dali's psychic life, which was demonstrating its obsessions at that time. However, structure comes before content, giving a form of symbolic representation or conceptualization. Dali set out to conquer the irrational by his paranoiac-critical method, forming a systematic structure which is an interpretation of the elements or different realities which he explores irrationally. He stresses "associations" or "relationships" that by being obsessive inform the most diverse and apparently unrelated phenomena. Dali gives us his best example of this by making it the heart of Millet's painting L'Angelus. Haim Finkelstein proposes that:

.....the schematic arrangements of formal analogies, ranging all over visible reality, in Dali's series of Morphological Echoes may be perceived as conceptualized representations of paranoiac-critical elaboration of a systematic structure. The formally identical shapes in these paintings may then be viewed as symbolic expressions of, or conclusions to, the obsessive recurrence of a motif. (Finklestein, 1996, p.196)

For example, in Suburbs of a Paranoiac-Critical Town, Gala's body overcomes all other elements present in the painting.

Lacan was one of the most influential and controversial French thinkers of the century. He had a singular method of making Freud's thought new again. Through his uncompromising style Lacan, in a very literal way, demonstrated how the traditional concept of reason was subverted

by Freud, that is how Freud took the ground from under the concept of reason which had dominated Western thought. Lacan showed that the unconscious has its own laws, which are not those of conscious reason. The unconscious is, one might say, essentially subversive, it is organised in the form of a constant questioning of the human subject which cannot be limited and tamed by the laws of good common sense, however much people - including analysts and analytic institutions - may try.

Chapter 3

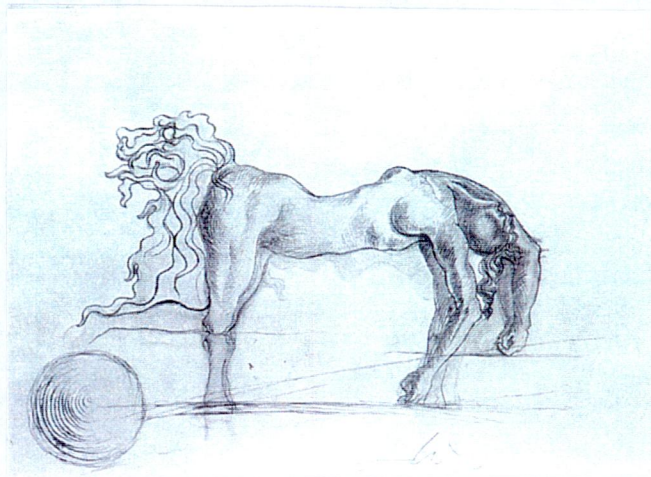
It is interesting to note the degree to which Dali's illustrations of the paranoid process progress in the course of the evolution of its theory. To begin with, as we have seen, in the essay L'Ané Pourri, Dali noted the distinction between the paranoid delusion and a simple hallucination and emphasized that the paranoid activity "employs materials admitting of control and recognition" (Lippard, 1970, p.98) in the external world that otherwise would be unrelated to each other. At this stage, Dali considered his theory mostly in reference to its visual application as a tool to discredit our perception of reality. This may be seen in the concept of the double and multiple image.⁴

Dali's double and multiple image concept can be found in a series of paintings entitled Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion. Dali has given us a definition for this picture:

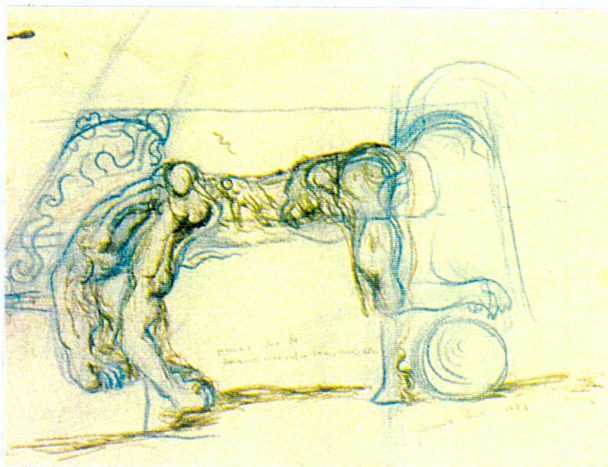
The double image (the example of which may be that of the image of the horse alone, which is at the same time the image of a woman) can be prolonged, continuing the paranoid process, the existence of another obsessive idea being then sufficient to make a third image appear (the image of a lion, for example) and so forth, until the concurrence of a number of images, limited only by the degree of the capacity for paranoid thought. (Dali, quoted in Descharnes, 1985, p.70)

These paintings would appear to satisfy Dali's demand that the representation of one object also be that of another object; in other words, that the images be circumscribed by one figuration. This is accomplished by slight addition of shadows and reflections but also by pronounced anatomical distortions. These distortions are where he strays from the demands of his theory. The concept of the multiple image in terms of purpose, iconography and pictorial character is questionable with regard to the success of its practical application. Perhaps this is why the few versions of Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion are the only examples that Dali ever painted to conform to this early concept of the multiple image.

⁴ See P.16 for definition of Dali's multiple image.

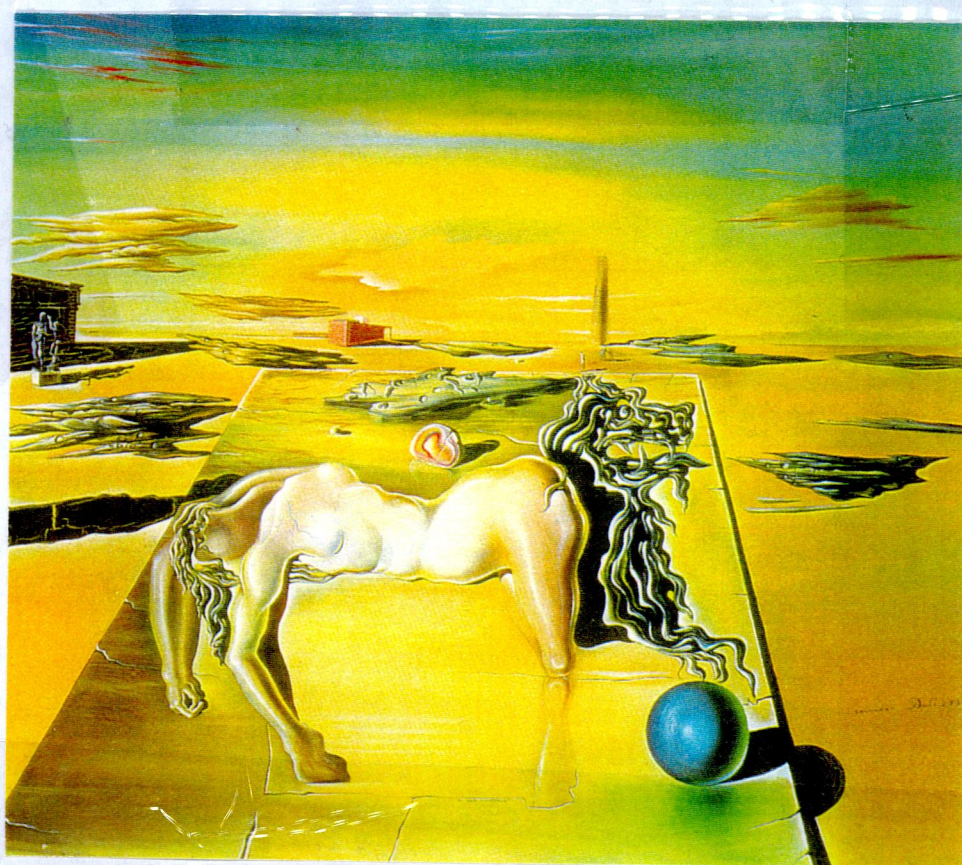


4(a) Study for Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion, 1930
Indian Ink on Paper, 47 x 61 cm
New York, Perls Galleries



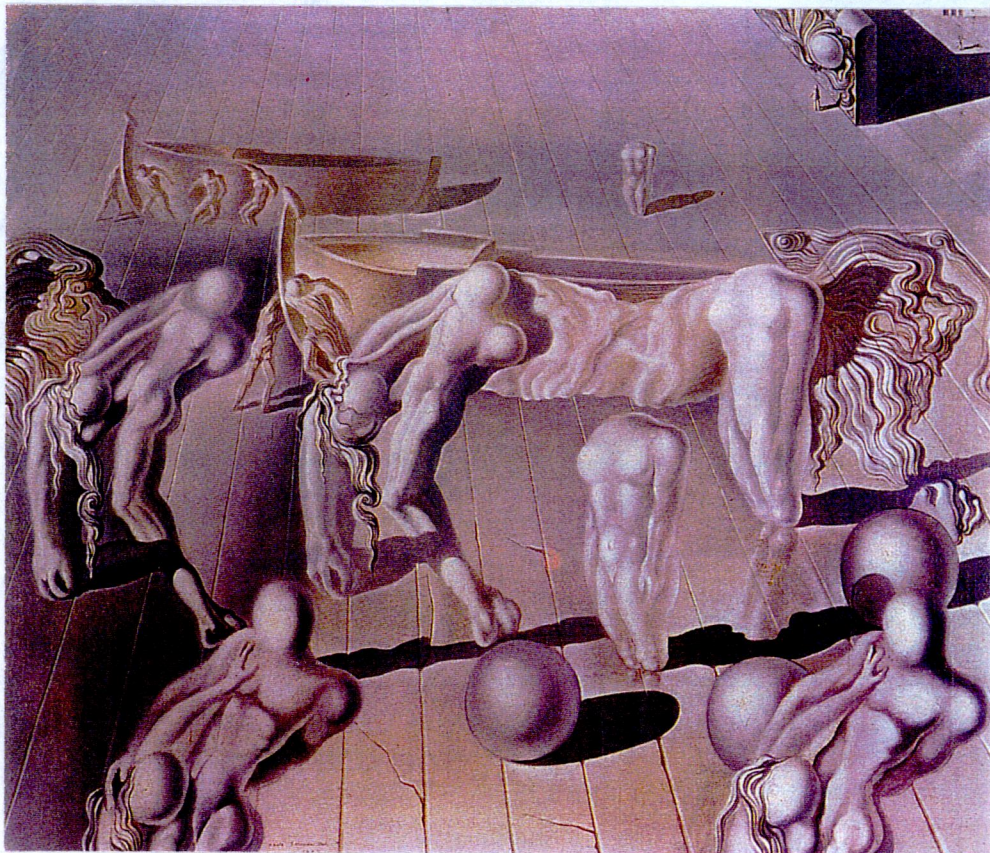
4(b) Study for Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion, 1930
Pencil, coloured pencils and ink 7.5 x 25 cm
Private Collection





5. Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion, 1930
Oil on canvas, 60 x 70 cm
Paris, private collection, formerly
Collection Vicomte de Noailles





6. Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion, 1930
Oil on Canvas, 52 x 60 cm
Paris, Private Collection



However, regarding the formation of double images, Dali was justified in the "paranoiac face", formerly introduced in a "Communication" published in the third issue (December 1931) of Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution, because it satisfied the theoretical formulations found in L'Ane Pourri. It contains the reproduction of a postcard photograph of a group of Africans sitting in front of a straw hut; turned sideways, the picture is transformed into a face. Dali explains how he was seized by this aspect of the photo in a period in which he was much obsessed by certain types of heads found in Picasso's art. Breton, preoccupied at the time with de Sade, discovered in it - according to Dali - a portrait of the Divine Marquis, powdered wig and all.

The only fact where Dali's "paranoiac face" may have failed to meet the theoretical formulations found in L'Ane Pourri would be the fact that one of the images does not present a distinct object, but a combination of landscape elements and figures. On the other hand, if we consider the postcard itself as the distinct element undergoing transformation, the different meanings ascribed to it by Dali and Breton may serve to illustrate the indeterminate nature of the images of external reality. In the context of its presentation, this "communication" refers itself not to art, but to life. Therefore, the "visage paranoiaque" may be situated at the heart of the Surrealist project as yet another manifestation of the desire to "transform the world" and heighten reality into a form of surreality.

Dali's chief claim for the paranoiac-critical method is that it would enable him to make concrete irrational images, cultivating confusion rather than contributing to the breakdown of the antimony between the mad and sane. He completely ignored that aspect of Breton's interest in madness, which let him into direct conflict with directors of lunatic asylums⁵; he ignored the social and moral responsibility which, by this period, Breton felt to be an integral part of Surrealist activity. Dali saw his method as one primarily applied to painting, rather than to "the resolution of the principal problems of life" (Breton, quoted in Ades, 1982, p.126), as Breton had written in the first Surrealist Manifesto. For Breton, Dali was not the only painter to create this problem. Breton also had doubts about Miró, who may have used automatism to produce undeniably great paintings, but without having understood its "profound value and significance" (Ades, 1982, p.126).

⁵ It was the same Prof. Claud under whom Lacan finished his studies that Breton came into conflict with at St. Annes' Asylum.

However, whereas Miró was accused of making automatism function purely aesthetically, Dali claims his paintings have no aesthetic value as such at all. Dali's results were in the end, as we shall see, just as distasteful to Breton. As Dali tells us in The Conquest of the Irrational:

My sole pictorial ambition is to materialize by means of the most imperialist rage of precision the images of concrete irrationality. The world of the imagination and the world of concrete irrationality must be as objectively evident, consistent, durable, as persuasively, cognoscitively and communicably thick as the exterior world of phenomenal reality. The important thing, however, is that which one wishes to communicate. The pictorial means of expression are concentrated on the subject. The illusionism of the most abjectly arriviste and irresistible mimetic art, the clever tricks of a paralyzing foreshortening, the most analytically narrative and discredited academicism, can become sublime hierarchies of thought when combined with new exactness of concrete irrationality as the images of concrete irrationality approach the phenomenal Real, the corresponding means of expression approach those of great Realist painting - Velasquez and Vermeer de Delft -images momentarily unexplainable and irreducible either by systems of logical intuition or by rational mechanism. (Dali, 1935, quoted in Bosquet, 1969, p.113)

He proceeds to attach other Surrealist methods:

They cease to be unknown images, for in falling into the domain of psycho-analysis, they are easily reduced to ordinary logical language. (Dali, 1935, quoted in Bosquet, 1969, p.113).



7(a) Paranoiac Visage - Postcard sent by Picasso to Dali, 1931
Technique and dimensions unknown
Private Collection



7(b) Paranoiac Visage - The Postcard Transformed, 1935
Oil on panel, 19 x 23 cm

Private Collection, formerly Collection Edward James





8. Paranoiac Visage, 1935
Oil, 62 x 80 cm
Whereabouts unknown



Also, Dali exclaims:

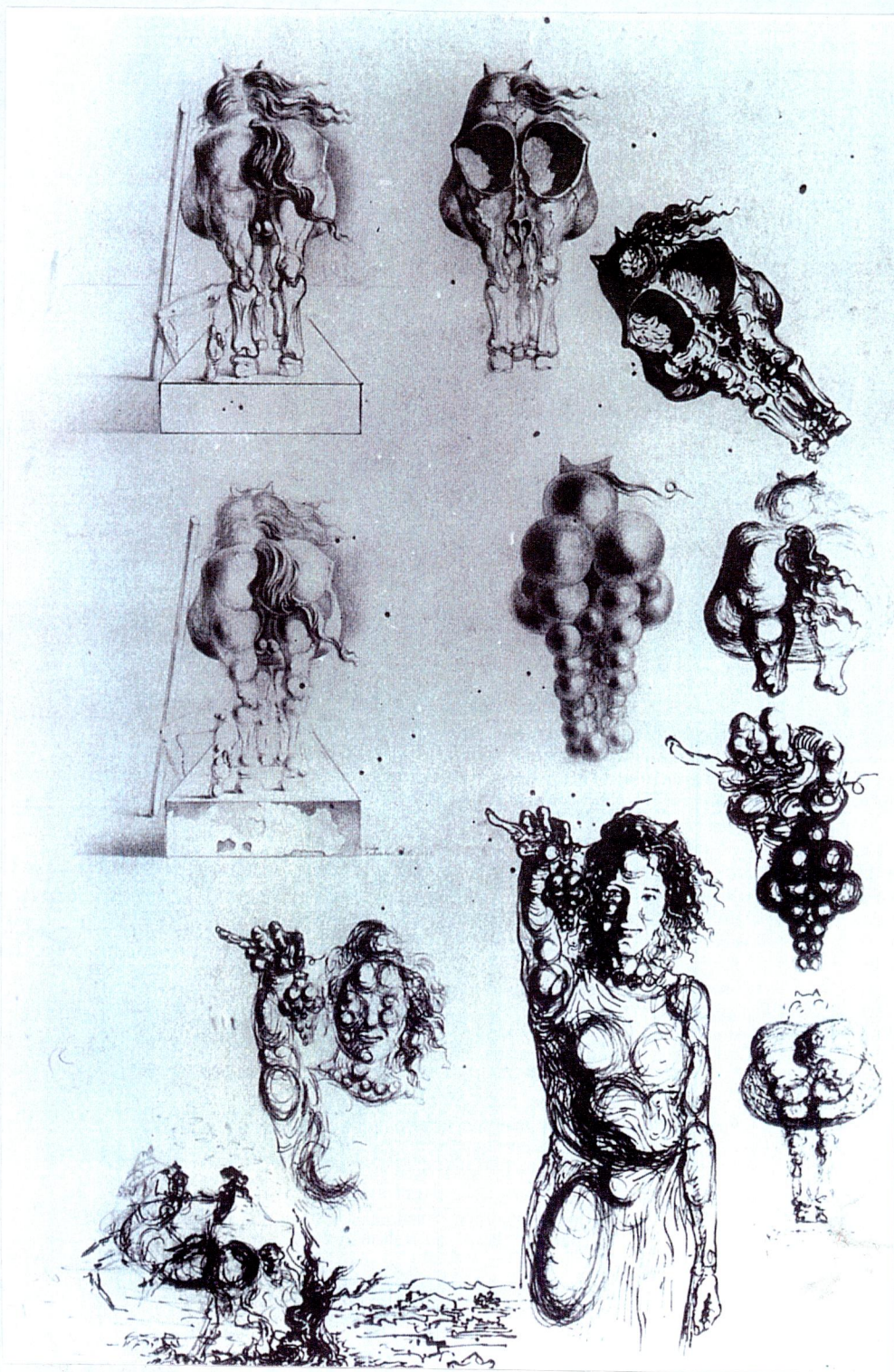
...their essentially virtual and chimerical
character no longer satisfies our desires
or our 'principles of verification' first
announced by Breton in his 'Discourse
on the Smidgen of Reality'.
(Dali, 1935, quoted in Bosquet, 1969, p.114)

The period of organic abstraction in Surrealist paintings is now, according to Dali, over.

Dali experimented off and on with his paranoiac-critical method throughout the thirties. A good example where Dali uses this method effectively, though not exclusively, may be found in the painting Suburb of the Paranoiac-Critical Town: Afternoon on the Outskirts of European History (1936). In this painting, we may find several different sets of paranoiac phenomena, which explore various ways of visually interlocking objects unexpectedly or irrationally linked. Firstly, let us focus on the architecture in this painting. We find three separate architectural spaces placed horizontally across the canvas, almost like three separate stage sets, all in disjunctive planes. All of these "stage sets" are places well known to Dali. If we start at the left of the canvas, we find a building from Palamós, south of Barcelona, where Dali stayed while he painted this picture. In the centre, through the archway, we find the village Vilabertrón, just outside Figueras and on the right of the canvas we find the Calle del Cal, main street of Cadaqués, leading down to the harbour. Each of these "stage sets" offers a glimpse through into an unspecified inner space, a door leading through into another world.

Another set of paranoiac phenomena is found in the centre of the canvas. A bunch of grapes in Gala's hand is linked with the skull on the table beside her and the hindquarters of the horse behind isolated on his pedestal. If we take a look at Study for Suburbs of the Paranoiac-Critical Town: Afternoon on the Outskirts of European History, 1935, we find Dali trying out ways of fusing these various objects, however, in the final painting we find hints of the formal similarities.

The last set of paranoiac phenomena in this painting is scattered across the canvas. There are several small figures dotted about in an almost miniaturist's technique. First of all, we focus

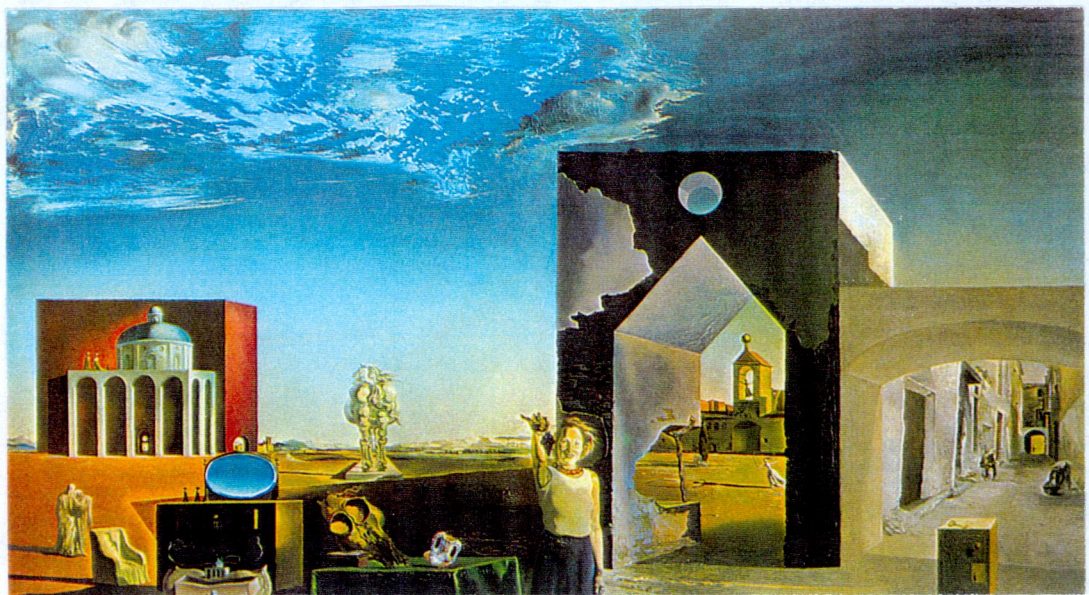


9. Study for Suburbs of a Paranoiac-Critical Town, 1935

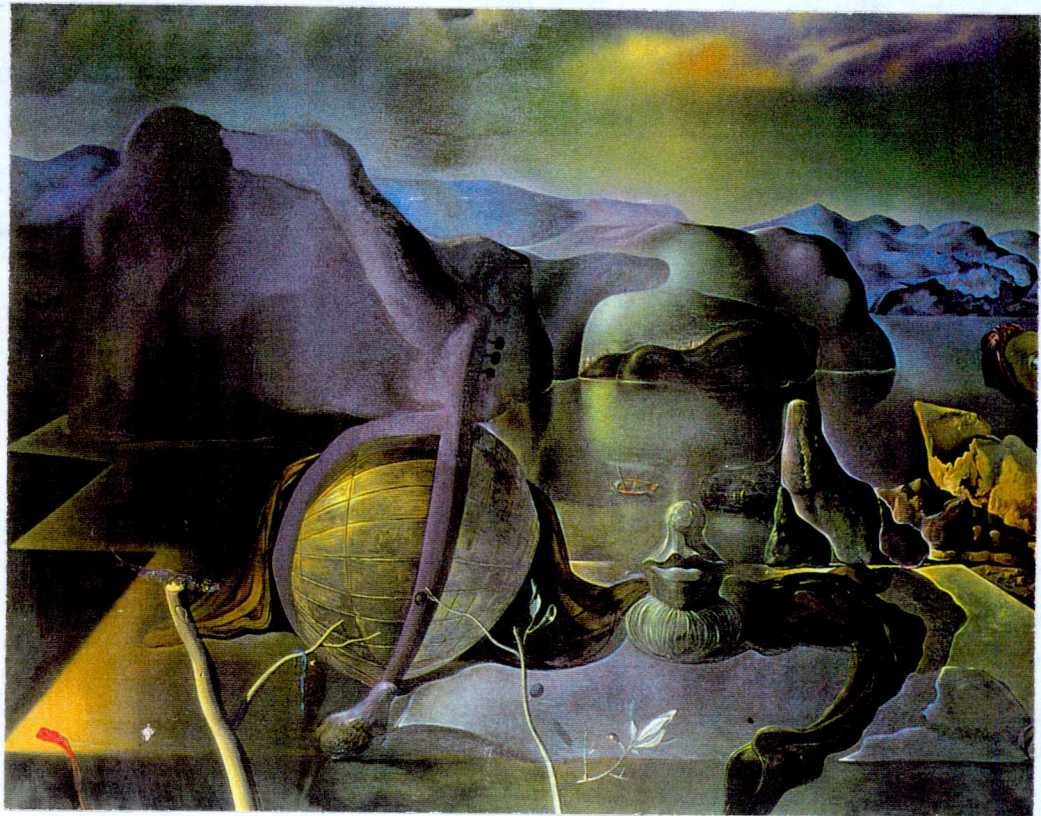
Ink and pencil on paper, 32.5 x 20.3 cm

Private Collection of Edward James



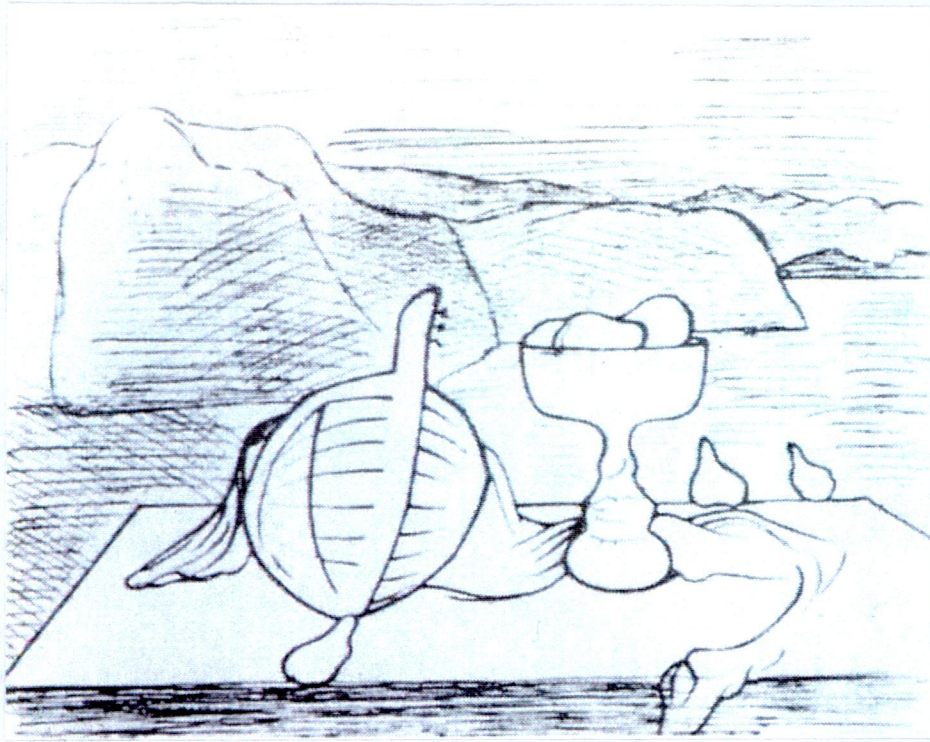


10. Suburbs of a Paranoiac-Critical Town: Afternoon on the Outskirts of European History, 1936
Oil on panel, 46 x 66 cm
Rotterdam, Museum Bajmans - van Beuningen,
formerly Collection Edward James



11. The Endless Enigma, 1938
Oil on Canvas, 114.3 x 114 cm
Madrid, Museo Nacional Reina Sofía,
Gift of Dalí to the Spanish State

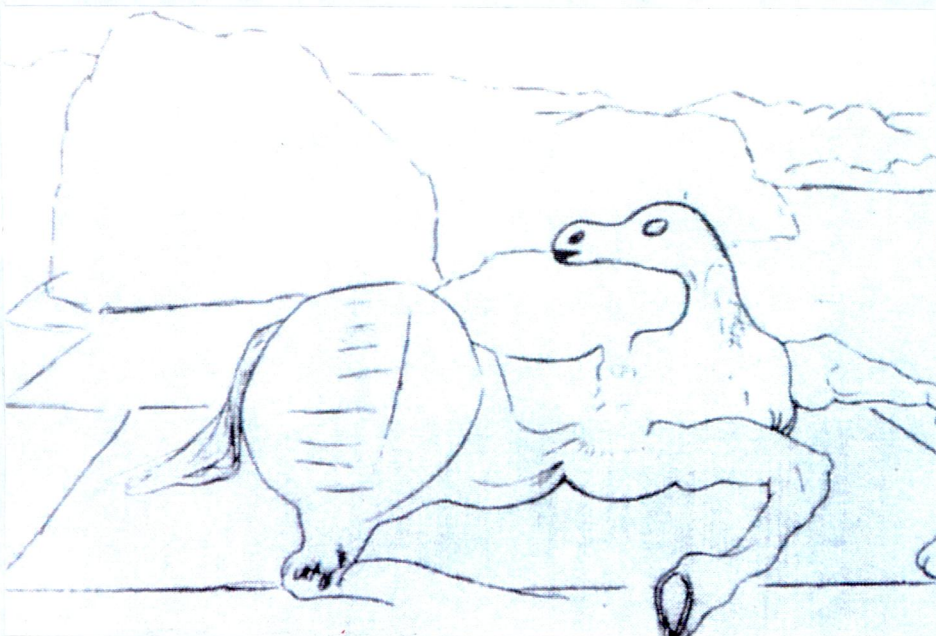




11(a) Mandolin, Fruit Dish with Pears, Two Figs on a Table, 1938

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

Private Collection



11(b) Mythological Beast, 1938

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

Private Collection

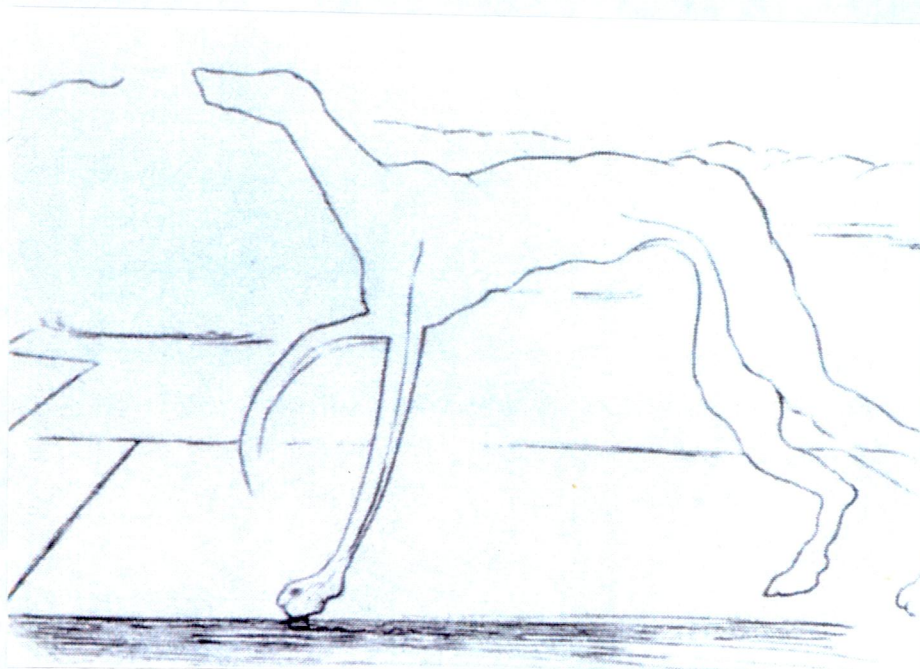




11(c) Face of the Great Cyclopean Cretin, 1938

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

Private Collection

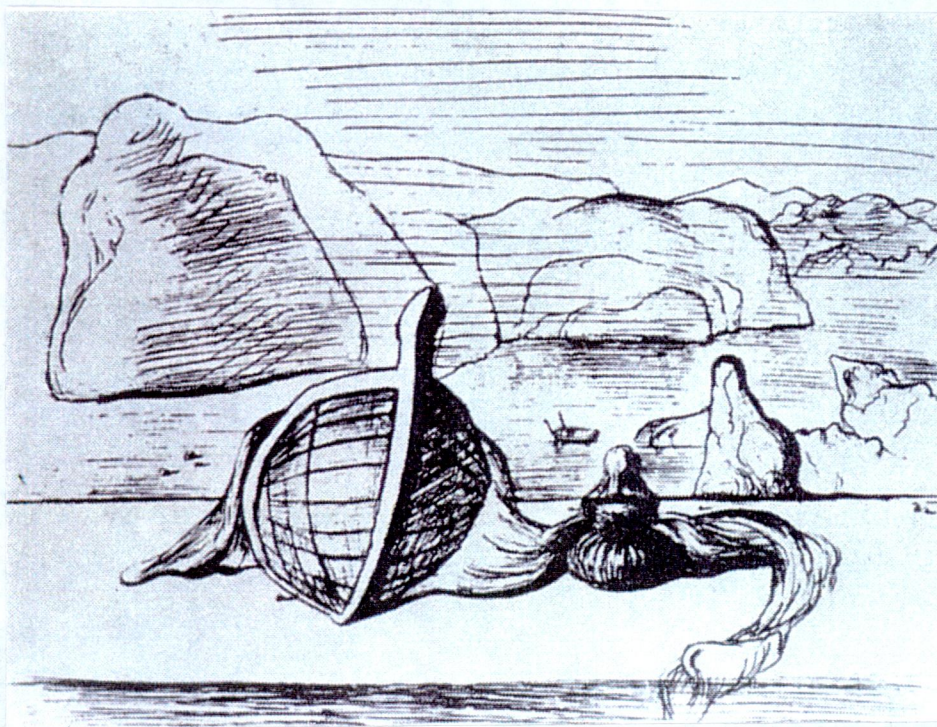


11(d) Greyhound, 1938

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

Private Collection



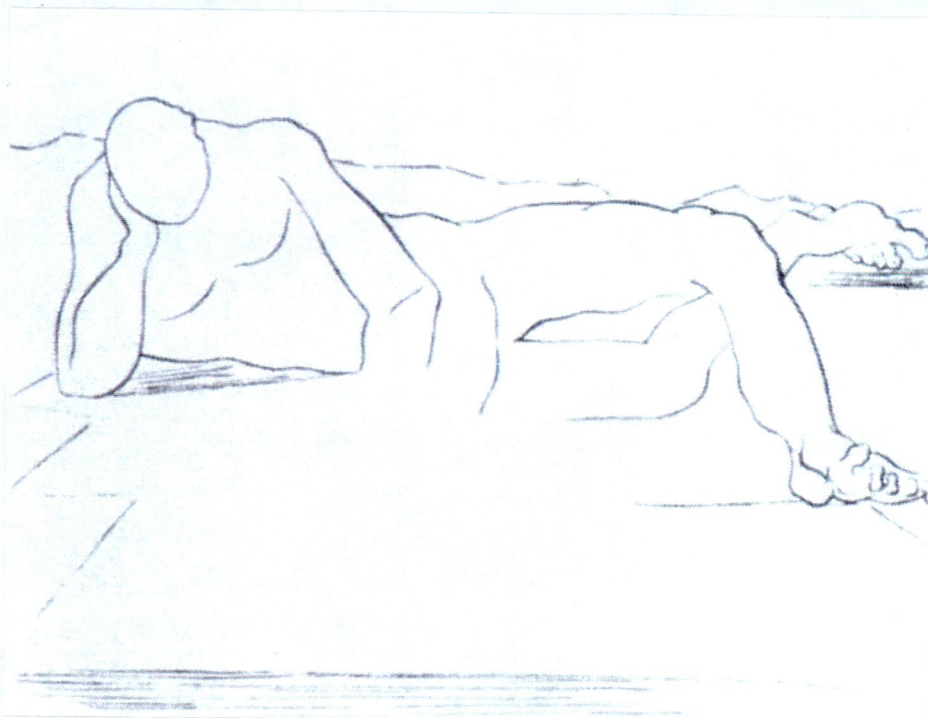


11(e) Beach at Cape Creus with Seated Woman seen from the Back

Mending a Sail, and Boat, 1935

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

Private Collection



11(f) Philosopher Reclining, 1938

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

Private Collection



on the girl running through the central archway, repeating the configuration of the swaying bell in the tower embrasure. The bell is seen again in the knob-topped chess-like pair of figures on the dressing-table in the foreground and again on the upper storey of the left hand building, where they are more recognizably human figures. The keyhole in the chest in the right foreground also relates to the same configuration. We may also find a link between the two draped and ghost-like figures in the lower left and the imprint of an absent figure in the armchair in front of them.

In examining Suburbs of the Paranoiac-Critical Town; Afternoon on the Outskirts of European History 1936, we find an introduction to the way Dali is using the paranoiac-critical method in his work. It provokes a genuine hallucinatory perceptual confusion and gives us a licence of interpretation explicitly allowed by Dali.

A more highly controlled version of the paranoiac-critical method may be found in The Endless Enigma (1938). This painting is one of a number of multiple images from 1938. Not as strict as the 1930 multiple images in their application of the formula introduced, as we have seen, in L'Ane Pourri, the 1938 paintings display a greater reliance on techniques Dali had adopted in the interim. The images are formed by visual configurations derived from the interaction of background and foreground elements, alternately functioning as landscape features and figures or objects. This approach calls for the extensive use of the well-known optical phenomenon of figure-ground reversal. Related to a series of beach scenes (some of which are dressed with telephones and grilled sardines) created in 1938 - 1939, these works show a receding body of water that also evokes, generally in an ambiguous manner, an alternate image of a projecting spatial form constituting, upon different "readings" of the image, parts of figures or objects. The concept may be clearly seen in Beach with Telephone (1938) where a small lake takes on - through a manipulation of reflections on the water and a shadowing around its banks - the three-dimensional form of a fish lying on a flat plane. The "stage set" for most of these multiple images is set in The Transparent Simulacrum of the Feigned Image (1938), where the foreground of the beach is seen as a tabletop, over which hangs the light-blue shape of a dish.

The Endless Enigma⁶ is the most complex work in the series. It is comprised of six different images, several of which appear in the other works. When this painting was exhibited at Julien Levy's gallery in New York in 1939, the catalogue contained six schematic drawings breaking the composite image down to its various readings. Dali refers in this catalogue essay as the first "systematic.....research into paranoiac metamorphoses". Dali is not satisfied with pursuing a double image, but succeeds in accumulating and making images rise simultaneously, or consecutively, depending on the particular capacity of the viewer. The subjects in the catalogue are shown in succession: a reclining philosopher; a greyhound lying down; a mythological beast; the face of the great Cyclopean, Cretin; a mandolin; a group of fruits and figs on the table; and, finally, a woman seen from the back, mending a sail. One may also find in this image besides, appearing in the corner at the right, the upper part of Gala's face with a turban on her head and at the bottom left, balanced on a stick, the skeletal remains of a grilled sardine. In 1939, in his essay The Most Recent Tendencies in Surrealist Painting, Breton wrote that the refinement of the paranoiac-critical method had reduced Dali "to concocting entertainments on the level of crossword puzzles"⁷ (Breton, quoted in Ades, 1982, p.137). It was probably this group of multiple images of 1938 that he was writing about.⁷

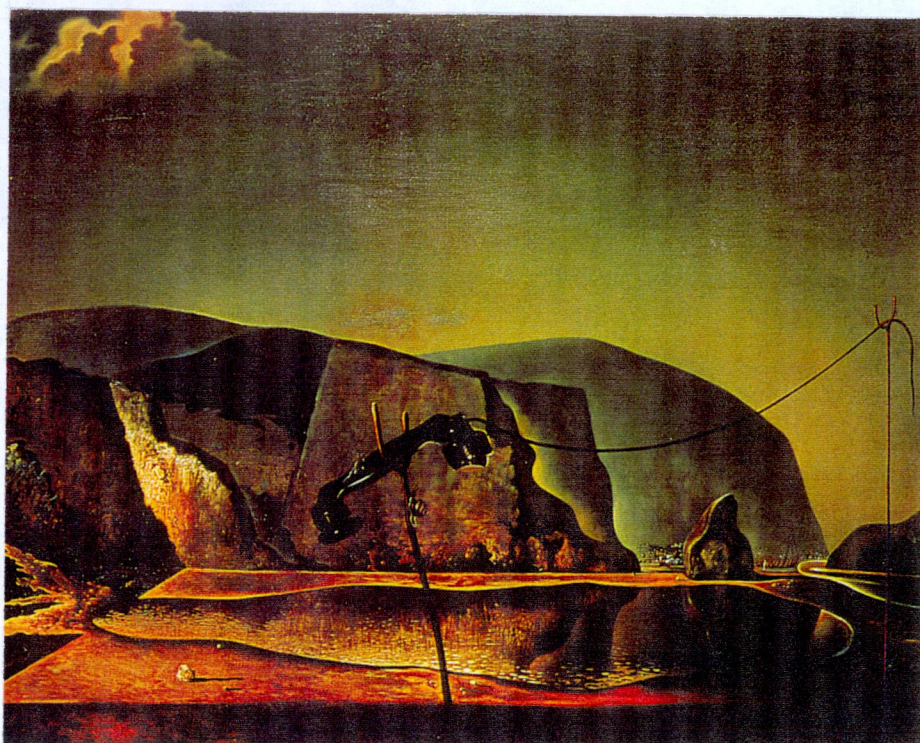
Dali's most sustained example of the experimental use of the paranoiac-critical method outside the field of his own painting is in his book The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus (1938).⁸ This book both explores and analyses a peculiarly vivid experience Dali had in 1929, when a clear vision of Millet's Angelus suddenly appeared in his mind. This vision was transformed by a latent meaning so strong that the painting became for Dali the "most troubling, enigmatic, dense and rich in unconscious thoughts" in the world. (Dali quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p.212). He called this "the initial delirious phenomena" and they were followed by a number of "secondary delirious phenomena" of various types, but all directly associated in his mind with the Angelus. Some of these

⁶ The Endless Enigma was painted at the estate of Coco Chanel on the C"te d'Azur. Finkelstein feels "We may be justified in considering The Endless Enigma (and by the same token other paintings in the series) as nothing more than a tour de force of illusionism and visual trickery, meant, no doubt, to amaze and dazzle Dali's rich patrons. (Finkelstein, 1996, p.203).

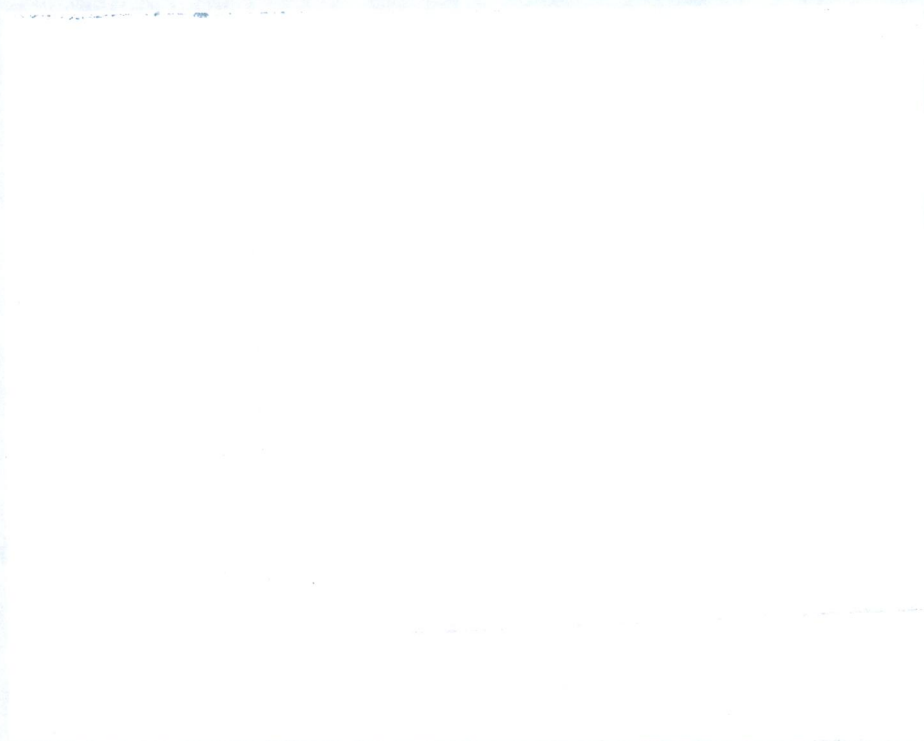
⁷ We may relate this to Finkelstein's criticism - footnote 6.

⁸ This book was written in 1938, but not published until 1963, having been lost for twenty-two years after being hidden during the fall of France, 1940.

⁹ Dali in his Secret Life tells us how this painting disappeared from his imagination for years. "...its magic ceasing to have the same effect on me.....". However, in 1929, when he saw this image again, the magic returned. "I undertook the systematic analysis of a series of the 'phenomena' that began to occur around the image referred to, which assumed for me a clearly obsessive character, and after having utilized this image of the Angelus in the most diverse forms, such as objects, paintings, poems, etc. I finally wrote an essay of paranoiac interpretation called The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus..... which I consider one of the fundamental documents of the Dalian philosophy." (Dali, 1982, p.64).



12. Beach with Telephone, 1938
Oil on canvas, 73.6 x 92 cm
London, The Tate Gallery,
formerly Collection Edward James





13. Transparent Simulacrum of the Feigned Image, 1938
Oil on canvas, 29 x 36.25 inches
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
Gift of A. Conger Goodyear, 1966



were the products of fantasies or daydreams - as when two of the pebbles he played with on the beach, which were of peculiar configurations, one pebble being much larger than the other and inclined slightly towards it, brought the two figures in the Angelus clearly to mind. The two figures in the Angelus also became associated, in Dali's mind, with two of the rocks above Cape Creus, and two menhirs in Brittany. The next delirious phenomenon consists of the actual experience of seeing the Angelus image reproduced on the cups and pot of a coffee set displayed in the shop window in the village named Port de la Selva, which reminded him significantly of a mother hen surrounded by her chickens. He also saw a coloured postcard Angelus in the fragment of a coloured lithograph of cherries - the most violent, he said, of all these secondary phenomena. Dali then proceeds to give an analysis of these phenomena, which are, he insists, psychic rather than visual - in other words, they are nothing to do with any traceable double image connected with the Angelus. These analyses themselves are rich in associations of personal or objective kinds: the cherries, for example, stand for the "couple", as the stones did, but are also associated with the teacups, with teeth and therefore the aggressive stance of the woman, and are also a familiar erotic symbol; "a classic obsessive theme in popular thought with prolific examples in the most evolved hierarchy of that thought: the picture postcard"¹⁰. (Ades, 1982, p.140).

The Angelus fascinated Dali as a child and it was not until the 1930s that he attempted to analyse this obsession. When he did, he found concealed in the picture:

The material variant of the immense and
atrocious myth of Saturn, of Abraham, of
the Eternal Father with Jesus Christ and
of William Tell, all devouring their own sons.
(Dali, 1933, quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p.215)

Each of the "secondary delirious phenomena" he experienced fed into this interpretation, the resemblance of the expectantly aggressive woman to the form of a praying mantis, well known for its practice of devouring the male after the sexual act, suggested the concealed "sexual cannibalism", while a fantasy in which he imagined the picture dipped in milk which submerged the figure of the man, recalled to Dali an illustration of a kangaroo with its young in its pouch that he had seen as a child and that troubled him then, because he read the white of the pouch

¹⁰ The cherries communicate an "aggressive awakening of cannibalistic desires" (Finkelstein, 1996, p.215) together with a strong erotic factor. Dali offers us a variety of popular postcards exhibiting pairs of cherries held by the teeth of smiling ladies, the "terrible teeth of a cannibal" that are the "magnificent and terrible jaws of one another" (Finkelstein, 1996, p.215)

as milk. The kangaroo also reminded Dali of the mantis and, therefore, of devouring, engulfing dominance.

The submersion of the man in the Angelus, in other words, of me in the maternal milk, can only be interpreted.....as an expression of the fear of being absorbed, annihilated, eaten by the mother.

(Dali, 1933, quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p.215)

An x-ray of the painting taken since the original text was written revealed a black shape which had been painted out by Millet. Dali takes this black shape as a coffin and thus confirming that the painting is unconsciously about the death of the son, Dali takes pains to link this "myth" to his own experience, suggesting that Gala took the place of the threatening mother in the early stages of their relationship. Throughout this relationship, he eventually overcame his fear of sex, which he had believed before he met her would definitely bring his own death with it.

The analysis of the Angelus is, then, a tour de force of mental disequilibrium, leading to the creation of what Dali suggests is a 'primal' and atavistic 'tragic myth'.....

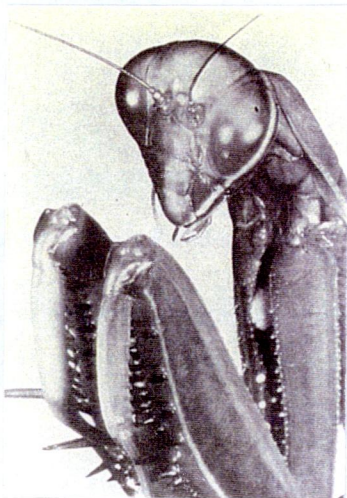
(Ades, 1982, p.143)

Dali's analysis has obvious connections with the techniques of psychoanalysis. However, he has always been concerned with distinguishing the paranoiac-critical method from psychoanalysis, in that psychoanalysis reduces phenomena to a rational language, while the paranoiac-critical method is one of "spontaneous irrational knowledge" (Bosquet, 1969, p115), irreducible in the end to daily logic. However, the analysis Dali gives us presents a more or less coherent reading of the painting in psychoanalytical terms, which have been arrived at through the subjective obsessive "delirious" associations of the paranoiac-critical method. Dali ends up with an objective interpretation of the painting, based on his own personal neurotic sexual fear, or rather unexpectedly awakened memories of it.

Dali's main concern is with a method of irrational knowledge based on the systematization of delirious phenomena. The greater part of Dali's interpretation partakes of the individual rather than the universal. Dali situates himself at the centre, with his childhood recollections of books he had read or that had been read to him, his infantile sexual theories, the sexual terror of his



14. The Angelus
Jean-François Millet, 1858-1859



15. Photograph of the Praying Mantis



adolescence and his relationship with Gala. Also, many of the associative links are forged within the framework of chance encounters or coincidences. All these things belong to the individual sphere; they form, to use a clinical analogy, "totality of the living experience of the patient"¹¹ (Finkelstein, 1996, p.216) and, as such, are valid. However, Dali would like us to participate in a continuous association of the personal and the universal in his scheme, due to his mysterious ability to delve into the sources of universal symbols by gaining insights from his own personal situation. This is achieved with the aid of the "precise apparatus of paranoiac-critical activity, in an indestructible delirio-interpretative system of political problems, paralytical images, questions of a more or less mammalian nature, playing the rôle of an obsessive idea" (Dali quoted in Bosquet, 1969, pp 116 and 117).

¹¹ Lacan, see p.20 - Lacan's knowledge was fed by the springs of life



16. Two of the popular postcards which Dali used to illustrate his paranoiac-critical analysis in *The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus*, 1963



CONCLUSION

Paranoid-critical activity: spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretive-critical association of delirium phenomena.

(Dali, 1935, quoted in Bosquet, 1969, p.115)

Throughout this thesis, I have explored the paranoiac-critical method of Salvador Dali, with the intention of investigating just how this method worked in the discrediting of reality. In doing this, I have found that in using this method Dali's basic aim was to systematize confusion. In other words, he sought after a plan or order for elements taken in the external world that would otherwise be unrelated to one another, thus attempting completely to discredit the world of reality.

Much of the strength of Dali's art and writing of the 1930s was in essence derived from his continuous struggle within the confines of a system of structures. It was throughout his decade that his practice of the paranoiac-critical method stretches its arms further than they were ever to be stretched again. It was because of Dali's method of discrediting reality that Breton felt that Surrealist experimentation "....has fully resumed, its perspectives and aims have been perfectly clarified" and all this

under the master-impulse given to it by Salvador Dali, whose exceptional interior boiling has been, during this whole period, an inestimable ferment for Surrealism.

(Breton, quoted in Finkelstein, 1996, p.177)

Indeed, it may be noted that Dali's theoretical work gained in depth precisely because he was constantly matching it against the limiting perspectives (for him) of Surrealist theory and subtly undermining generally accepted Surrealist orthodoxies.

Lacan offered Dali a new vision of Freudian theory. There is no way of knowing the extent to which Dali fully understood the theories of these two men. He shows an unquestionable knowledge of both Freudian and Lacanian theory, but it is somewhat questionable as to how he puts this knowledge into practice. There seemed to be an ongoing problem for Dali in translating his theoretical formulations into his practical work.

Paranoia, by virtue of its own nature, draws into the realm of delusive obsession all kinds of unconnected experiences and images. It would be unjust to say of certain of Dali's images, for which he claims significance, that they are connected in a purely arbitrary and subsequently meaningless fashion. The nature of paranoiac-critical activity as Dali has repeatedly assured us, is to systematize confusion. It is only fair to draw the distinction between a work such as *The Endless Enigma*, which Breton described as being on the level of "crossword puzzles" and such psychologically pertinent sets of interlocked phenomena as The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus.

Indeed, whether we feel Dali had any true understanding of the principles of Freud or Lacan, or if he was consistently true to his paranoiac-critical method or not (for example, in his painting, *The Endless Enigma*), he was still extremely capable of creating striking visual dimensions for the imaginative mind through his paranoiac-critical vision.

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