

‘HOW DOES PSYCHOANALYSIS HELP UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENA MANIFESTING IN THE PERSONALITY OF SALVADOR DALI?’ © Ajanta Judd, 1993

‘It was during my childhood that all the archetypes of my personality, my work, and my ideas were born. The inventory of these psychological materials is therefore essential.’ (Cowles, 1959:45)

Abstract

Salvador Dali was one of the group of painters renowned for their contribution to the production of surrealist art. Surrealism was, and is, an acquired taste with many of its concepts built upon the theories of Sigmund Freud. Devotees are well aware of the irrational and eccentric nature of its creators. Dali himself developed a method of painting much akin to Freudian ‘free association’ which he called the ‘Paranoia-Critical’ method. With this method, Dali created a way in which he could come to terms with his numerous obsessions and neuroses.

These aspects of his psyche were formed in early childhood, perpetuated by over-indulgent and over-protective parents who afforded Dali a pampered, egotistical and narcissistic existence. This essay will examine the childhood experiences that ultimately moulded Dali’s personality. It will look at the relationship between creativity and psychosis and the influence of Freudian theory on Dalinian art.

2. DALI FAMILY HISTORY

Salvador Dali was born in the northern Spanish town of Figueras (province of Gerona, area of Catalonia). It is theorized that Dali was a descendant of Colonel Peter O’Daly, an Irishman who fought with Lord Cochrane, Nelson’s aid at Abukir and Trafalgar. O’Daly had been a governor of the Medas Islands which lie off the Mediterranean coast of Spain south of Cadaques. In recent lineage, Dali is related to a certain Dali I Rague, a blacksmith in Cadaques. The Dali family was full of notables; lawyers, doctors, Mayor and Dali’s father carried the title of notary.

2.1 The Spanish Notary

Salvador senior was the typical country lawyer of northern Spain; a familiar figure. As a notary, he was empowered to act in fiduciary, escrow, and other matters of financial estate management of trust. Since his signature could not be bought; he was more respected than a judge (Secrest, 1986:23). He was known to be a learned, stubborn and perplexing personality. Joseph Pla, a distinguished Catalan writer who knew the Dali family well makes this description of Dali senior:

‘He jumped on everybody’s bandwagon, and every time with his absolutely definite, indestructible, ingrained, granite-like conviction. He was never one to take the defensive, but was

always trying to win people over. He attacked with sarcasm and gesticulations which reverberated throughout the region.'

A nephew added that the notary's militancy often took an ominous turn. 'He was a difficult man, very honest but with a violent personality', he recalled. 'He was always having fights (Secret: 25). Dali himself says, 'When my father got mad, the whole Rambla of Figures held its breath' (Dal:1976:25). It is interesting to note that Dali senior laboured under a social stigma bequeathed to him as a teenager when his own father suicided after losing on the stock market. He had therefore felt compelled, as notary of Figueres, to prove his social respectability. Early photographs of Dali's father are in marked contrast to the bloated, balding, defeated figure his son artistically portrayed in later years. Images of the notary of Figueres would recur with dreamlike repetitiveness in his son's paintings. These would consist mainly of multiple images of an ink-spattered minor functionaries with filing-cabinet drawers for brains (Cowes, 1959:45). In this way Dali would underscore his father's position; an indication of fearful and contemptuous feelings toward him.

Paternal points to consider for psychoanalytic interpretation:

- Dali's father was a man of great conviction.
- He was an atheist, with structuralist ideas.
- He was erratic, explosive, violent and, sometimes quite irrational.
- He was haunted by his own father's suicide.
- He enjoyed intimidating and frightening people, especially in regard to death and dying.
- He loved his children
- The death of his first born son (also Salvador) manifested within him a deep seated anxiety which he transferred onto the 'second' Salvador.
- This facilitated an over-indulgent and over-protective attitude toward Salvador.
- He was loyal and loving toward his wife.

2.2 Dali's Mother, Filipa

Felipa Dali was seen as a woman of exceptional patience, an adoring, forgiving mother, full of selfless passion (Secret: 47). Dali said: 'My mother's sweet voice rocked my dreams; she was the honey of the family; I desired to drink her' (1976:26). She was competent and practical; an indispensable central figure within the Dali household. Felipa died when Salvador was twenty. The death of this dark haired erect woman was a terrible blow. He worshipped her saintly moral values, which he thought were well above being human. He counted on her goodness. He used to reason that if she loved him with a love so proud, she could not possibly be wrong.

At her deathbed, he rallied against the fate, weeping in despair, with shuddering sobs (Dali -a: 32). Dali says, 'My mother alone could have changed my soul; I felt her loss was a challenge and resolved to get even with fate by becoming immortal'. However important Felipa was in Dali's life, it is puzzling to note that there does not appear to be much imagery of her in her son's paintings.

Material points to consider for psychoanalytic interpretation:

- Dali's mother was a 'paragon of virtue'; moralistic, patient and quiet; the 'epitome of goodness'.
- She was creative and innovative.
- She was proud of her son, yet shared the same anxiety, over-indulgence and over-protection that his father exhibited.
- She loved her husband and son, patiently accepting their gregarious natures. She was submissive to her husband.
- She exerted a subtle but firm pressure on her children.

2.3 SIBLINGS

2.3i The 'First Salvador'

'My mother was completely bowled over by the precocity of this brother, his grace and beauty were for her subjects of exaltation . . . She was never able to get over it'. (Dali: 1976). The first son of Salvador Dali I Cusi and Felipa Domenech, named Salvador Dali I Domench, was born on 12th October 1901 and died on 1st August 1903 at the age of twenty-one months. The second Salvador was born on 11th May 1904 in the same bed; his mother was 30, his father, 41 (Secrest: 22)

The birth of Salvador number two convinced Dali's parents that their son had been reborn. The idea of his reincarnation in a new guise was implanted on the new Dali's pliant young mind. Dali's cousin said, 'They made comparisons between the two every day. They used the same clothes and gave him the same toys. They treated him as if he was the other one and Dali got the impression that he didn't exist. It became the source of all his problems. (Secrest: 25).

This haunted Dali for the rest of his life. He felt that he had been born twice and was therefore a double self, half a person, someone who did not really exist (Dali.a; 12). 'All my efforts thereafter were to strain toward winning back my rights to life, first and foremost by attracting the constant attention and interest of those close to me by a kind of perpetual aggressiveness'. 'Van Gogh lost his mind because his dead double was present at his side. Not I'.

2.3ii Ana Maria; Dali's sister

In her memoirs, Dali's sister, Ana Maria, portrayed childhood in the Dali household as idyllic. She claims that their early childhood was one of amiable companionship, yet the family was always concerned with Salvador's temper tantrums and 'illnesses'. As years passed and Salvador became a 'cocky young blade' he tolerated Ana Maria only as a disciplinary force on the side of his parents. Eventually, Ana Maria claims, selfish preoccupation with his own thoughts began to poison her affection for him. Thus, she turned completely sour when he threw over even the most elastic notions of conventional behaviour (Cowles: 45). According to his sister, Salvador was finally led from the path of righteousness by his cubist and surrealist friends when he left Spain for Paris (Cowles: 45). After this, they remained uncommunicative.

2.4 The Precocious Child

Salvador Dali's childhood experiences provided a breeding ground for an eccentric, creative, imaginative and neurotic personality. His feelings towards his dead brother and his parent's resultant anxiety were the primary cause of his early behaviours and developing neuroses. Merle Secrest related that a child's predicament in not being loved for himself- or, more precisely, being valued for what he is not - has been studied, and some authorities believe that the precociously gifted child is most at risk. His finely tuned senses ensure that he will pick up the unconscious message. He may even lose contact with what he really thinks and feels; the mask will become the face. (1986:25) A famous French portrait painter, Edouard MacAvoy, said that Dali talked of almost nothing other than his dead brother. 'He had the idea that he had actually become his brother and at night he would go to the cemetery to his brother's tomb, his hands folded in prayer. His exact words were, 'I no longer know whether I am alive or dead' (1986:26). Glimpses of Salvador Dali's erratic childhood behaviour is offered below in an attempt to provide enlightenment on his eccentric personality:

5 years: Deliberately pushed a friend onto rocks then feigned heartbreak, running home to get help. Watched with no remorse as the adults hovered around his bleeding body. Compulsively bit the head off a bat which was dying after being shot. It was covered in ants and blood.

6 years: Kicked Ana Maria who was crawling on all fours, hard in the head. Punished by his father and locked in bedroom. Screamed and sobbed until mother became concerned. Immediately understood how he could turn such situations to his advantage. Started to feign choking attacks on food. Delighted in repeating these terrible choking melodramas horrifying his parents.

7 years: Refused to go to school. Father exercised his authority, dragging Salvador through town. Both were furious. Shocked by death, yet besieged by constant impulses to touch putrefying animals. (Dali, 2976:16-22).

8 years: Delighted in watching full bottles of wine rolling off the table much to the despair of others.

9 years: Started throwing himself down stairs to attract the attention of others.

The above instances are symptomatic of Salvador Dali's childhood behaviour. He repressed his painful shyness and self-doubt, displacing it with exhibitionism, attention seeking and tantrums. He was terrified of his father's explosive energy yet impressed by his conviction and free thinking philosophy. Caught between hatred and love, he turned in on himself during his school years, living in a silently prideful quarantine. Dali claims that within a year at school he had forgotten everything his mother had taught him (Dali.a: 25). He feigned ignorance, yet not one thing that was taught at school escaped his memory. Monsters invaded his nights and he would scream in terror. His ever-patient mother or exasperated father would sit and comfort him all night.

Dali enjoyed defecating in various places throughout the house just to upset people. He then revelled in delight while the family looked all over the house. He had a king's crown which he enjoyed pulling down over his head until he got unbearable headaches. This, he did as a representation of everything he wanted to wrest from his father. Dali senior gradually became a slave of Salvador's paranoia in which he stripped his father of all attributes of power - reducing him into a symbol. The young Salvador maintained a despotic power over his family. He had them running around in circles. His days were made up of irrational will (Dali: 27).

Salvador claimed that as a child he came to realize his uniqueness and genius. It often happened that he could not tell the real from the imaginary. This led to delirium which he let flow. His intention was, while remaining awake, to incessantly increase his desires by all his imaginative possibilities. One of his ploys was to get down on all fours and swing his head left and right till he became dizzy - seeing bright circles that gradually turned into fried eggs. This led to a continual practice of retinal retention (Dali.a: 37)

3. THE 'FANATIC' GROWS UP

'To the man child I was, my father was a giant of strength, violence, authority and imperious love. I have often said that the greatest of sensual enjoyments would be to sodomize my dying father - can there indeed be for any man a more awful profanation or a greater proof of his own life, to give himself and to take, than this sacrilege, this defiance?' As Salvador grew older he never lost his resentment of his father or the feeling of being superfluous; ill loved for himself. Despair drove him to delirium, but he was

fascinated by the purely Spanish hardness of a father who he claims was the natural, biological and psychological axis of his future personality; he could never stop admiring him (Dali.a: 26). He shared with his father, a morbid fear of death and resented him for imparting this neurosis on him. Here was the constant torment of his life whose image Dali substituted for a grasshopper in his paintings. Therefore, his father took on the form of Salvador's morbid fear, constantly springing without warning.

Salvador Dali left adolescence behind, having had a privileged and indulgent childhood. He had grown up in an environment that fostered his enormous creativity and imagination. The surrounding landscape inspired him and featured frequently in his works. The family had relatives and friends who were intimately involved in the world of art, opera and literature. Many of his close relatives (mother, aunt, grandmother) were artistically talented. This afforded the young Salvador much insight and encouragement in his quest for artistic distinction. He started drawing at a young age and was copiously painting before reaching adolescence.

3.1 Sexual Life: The Voyeur

Salvador Dali, as one of his paintings ('Le Grand Masturbateur') relates, was epitomized as a 'great masturbator'. He derived much of his sexual pleasure from autoeroticism. Most of his normal emotional and sexual development had been blighted by a childhood in which he was monstrously spoiled, amused, placated, petted, humoured and protected from life (Secrest: 58). His father's idea of sexually educating his children was to leave a graphically illustrated book on venereal disease open on the piano. This, I believe, helped to create a deep seated neurosis (he was panic-stricken) in the young Salvador; one in which he was fearful of the sexual act and instead preferred to play the role of voyeur.

In none of the research available can I find evidence that he consummated intercourse with a woman. His later relationship with his wife, Gala, alludes to certain experiences, but nowhere can it be ascertained that he physically consummated their marriage. Dali was not a homosexual. He was fascinated with the female form and often fantasized about being female. The religious atmosphere in Catalonia during the time Salvador was first experiencing sexual impulses alluded to masturbation as an act of sin in which one is led to mental illness. Therefore I believe the young, sensitive Salvador internalised his guilt, always being at odds with his joy of masturbating and the sense of depression felt after orgasm. This, combined with his father's ill advised attempts at sex education instilled in Salvador a deep seated sexual neurosis. Hence, all his erotic experiences were linked to either voyeurism; expression through masochistic behaviour, or, projection through painting.

3.2 Gala; The Muse

Salvador Dali's great love in life was for his wife, Gala. He had gone to inordinate lengths to attract her; initially shaving his armpits and knees; dyeing them with laundry blue; painting himself with boiled fish glue, water, goat manure and aspic; then hysterically washing it off. Gala's initial reaction was not favourable. She thought him obnoxious and unbearable, yet intuition told her that his hysteria was not gaiety nor scepticism, but fanaticism. After transferring her affections and allegiance to Dali, she became his business manager, inspiration and muse. Sterile, following an operation to remove a uterine tumour in 1931, she was perhaps the perfect sex object for Dali, who was always happiest keeping women at a voyeuristic distance. (Taschen, 1979:38).

4. PHOBIAS AND FETISHES

One of Salvador Dali's great fears was death, presumably a legacy from his father. He had a morbid fascination for dead and putrefying objects (unable to resist the impulse to touch or bite them) and often depicted them in his paintings. Images of his dead brother plagued him throughout life and as a child he often rocked himself to sleep with the thought of lying beside his dead brother in a coffin. Dali's phobia about grasshoppers is widely known. It came to symbolize everything about himself that he detested; his emotional infantilism, his morbid fear of death, his feeling of being the helpless victim of circumstance, and above all, his aloneness (Secrets: 41) Later, he was to substitute the image of his father for the grasshopper, granting him the ultimate insult.

Dali was often pre-occupied with his ability to produce hallucinatory images. He claims that his first hallucinatory experiences were as a young child. It is difficult to decipher whether these were actually hallucinations given his great imagination and ability to conjure up images at will. States of delirium that he worked himself into could have contributed to this phenomenon. It is said that the intensity of Dali's hallucinatory powers makes other believe in the reality of what he sees. In truth he could say that the petrification of a donkey can be considered as 'the hard and blinding lash of new gems'.

Food was always one of Dali's 'self-prescribed' fetishes. It occurs repeatedly in his autobiography: the prologue opens with: 'At the age of six I wanted to be a cook'. Such words as spinach, shellfish, cannibalism, bones and caviar are frequently used to describe paintings (Taschen, 1979:51). Images of the fried eggs that he saw when practising retinal retention figured constantly in his work. Raw meat was another frequent ingredient. Dali's fetish for shoes goes back to his adolescence and appears in many paintings and objects. Schiaparelli created a hat in the form of a shoe based on an idea by him. The shoe is an object he claimed, 'most charged with realistic virtues as opposed to musical objects which I have always tried to represent as demolished, crushed, soft-cells of rotten meat' . . .

5. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND CREATIVITY

Grinberg (1971) noted that, while every individual is endowed with creative capacity, at least two types exist:

1. The ordinary one, i.e., the exclusive patrimony of the human race and,
2. The exceptional creativity and originality, characteristic of certain remarkably gifted individuals.

Salvador Dali, with his maddening eccentricity was certainly gifted with astounding creativity and originality. Grinberg said that all humans have potentialities, which may develop into true creativity or genius, depending on certain ego capacities and the quality of internal and external object relations. The creative act is the outcome of a process in which current structures undergo a state of transitory disorganization in order to reintegrate later on a different basis. Both the disintegration and the reorganization are parts of the creative process, and are condensed in the creative act (Grinberg, 1972:21).

The artist seeks relief from his persecutory and depressive anxieties through projective identification (as in Dali's projection of this sexual neurosis), but this may be in the service of communication with good objects of the external world rather than an aggressive mode (Sterba, 1972:23). Salvador would no doubt fit into the aggressive mode. His prolific, fragmented and disjointed images thus would be reconciled with release of his major depressive anxieties through this projective identification. Sterba went on to say that all concepts depend on the establishment of inner mental representations. Such representations are formed out of the perceptions and stimuli received from outside objects. Creative imagination consists of breaking old, well-established patterns of relationships and establishing new ones. This process occurs intrapsychically within and between object-representations (1972:24).

The high narcissistic involvement in the creative act is not limited to the inspirational phase; it extends also into the elaborative phase of creativity. However, it seems that in this phase the narcissistic cathexis is shifted to the superego. In 'Narcissism: An Introduction', Freud postulated that our obedience to the superego is due to the high narcissistic cathexis of this structure. This narcissistic cathexis of the superego demands and forces the creative personality to lead his work to the highest perfection he is capable of achieving. His need to perfect his creation, and this is particularly true of creative artists, seems to absorb the superego forces to an extent where less control is left for the rest of behaviour. This extract is a splendid explanation of the mental processes controlling the supreme egoist and narcissist, Salvador Dali. Since the creative process implies a situation of change, there must be mourning for old structures and old aspects of the self. Thus every creative act is specifically based on the working through of depressive

fantasies aiming at the reparation of the early-lost objects which he feels are damaged (Klein, 1940; Segal, 1955; Grinbert, 1963).

5.1 Dali: Psychotic or Genius?

‘The only difference between myself and a madman is that I am not mad!’ (Dali: 1956).

Grinbert (1972) felt that the creative imagination resorts to psychotic mechanisms, which evolved by way of chaotic disorganization in primary process mechanisms. There appeared to be a decisive difference from the psychotic and the normal individual. The normal person, unlike the psychotic, could endure the feeling of object loss without overwhelming anxiety and in normal psychotic and creative individuals alike, the first reaction to object loss is hallucinatory wish fulfilment. It appears that the psychotic mind remains close to this level, characterised by delusion, blurring of boundaries between self and object, reality and fantasy (Isn’t this Dali to a tee?) There is a predominance of envy, hate, destructiveness and withdrawal from reality. The normal mind does not work in this manner and cannot tolerate disintegrative tendencies or surrender itself to psychotic mechanisms for fear of succumbing and being ‘unable to return’ (doing ‘mad’).

The creative mind employs certain ‘psychotic’ mechanisms (splitting, omnipotence, idealization and projective identification), which enable him to recreate the lost object. This produces hallucinatory types of fantasy (as in Salvador’s self professed hallucinations) together with real thinking, which leads the creative imagination ‘beyond the reality principle’, without fully withdrawing from reality. Grinberg mentioned those geniuses (for example, Van Gogh) in whom adequate regulation failed, and psychotic traits, often irreversible, became manifest. However, due to a particular functioning of their splitting process and obsessive mechanisms of adaptive control, these personalities were able to set out their creative talent in all its worthiness, in spite of the psychotic aspects of their personality (1972:24)

6. SURREALISM

Surrealism is said to be a pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. It manifests within thought’s dictation and an absence of all control exercised by reason. It is outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations. Surrealism rests on the belief in the superior reality of forms of association neglected heretofore. As such, Surrealism had from the very beginning turned its attention to madness, which it increasingly saw as a relative state defined by an erroneous or narrow concept of sanity and normality (similar to Grinberg’s concept of the ‘creative psychotic’). The idea that the boundary between the sane and the insane was not fixed, that madness was not an absolute state, but one defined by certain legal and social conventions was not new, but where the surrealists differ say, from the Romantics, was in the newness of scientific and clinical

research into the human mind available to them, which represented that madness could be directly connected to the degree of suppression or, in Surrealism, of that unconscious area of the psyche that exists in all people (Ades, 1982:122).

Emphasis on individuation is the source of one of Surrealism's most abiding successes in that it spawned the individual and distinct talents of a famous group of painters including Salvador Dali. Thus considered, the Surrealist movement cannot be seen as a style of painting but rather as a school of thought, the surrealists were the pearl divers of the unconscious and as such at least in their formative early states had more in kin with the psychological sciences than with any aesthetic movement (Wach, 1992:170).

What we have in surrealism then, are poeticised psychological insights that attempt to stabilize and harmonize, to hold and and to artistically fix the inherent flux of the mind, art that establishes reality as well as portraying it, Art not as symptom but as revelation. Given the tenor of all this, it is not surprising to find that the surrealists were interested in Sigmund Freud and more particularly in Freudian Interpretations of the functioning of the mind. Surrealists were the first artists to make extensive mention of Freud and the first to incorporate his theories into their practice or put another way, to modify their practice in order to adapt to Freudian theory. This admiration led to close reading of Freud's texts (Wach: 171).

6.1 Dali and Surrealism

The surrealist object, Dali maintained, completely discredited the dream period of Surrealism, and the meaningless writing dictated by the unconscious. He saw the object as a new reality, useless from a practical point of view but 'created wholly for the purpose of materializing in fetishist way, with the maximum of tangible reality, ideas and fantasies of a delirious character'. People would no longer face the limitations of only talking about their manias and phobias, 'but could now touch them, manipulate and operate them with their own hands' (Taschen, 1979:62)

6.2 Imagery and Symbols

An important local source of imagery for Salvador's surrealist paintings was his familiar and loved Catalan Landscape. As he wrote in 'The Secret Life': 'But aside from the aesthetics of this grandiose landscape, there was also materialized, in the very corporeity of the granite, that principle of paranoiac-critical metamorphosis (see 7.3). Dali was a master of the 'double image'. Possibly reminiscent of repressed anxious feelings toward his dead brother, doubles appeared constantly in his paintings (The Great Paranoiac, 1936; Apparition of Face and Fruit Dish on Beach, 1938; The Endless Enigma, 1938) (See Appendix A). Of all the images that persist in Dali's pictures another seems predominant - the crutch. It is

his most graphic storytelling device and he sees its significance in two lights: one sociologically, as a necessity for rich but 'weak' society; secondly, in the bifurcated shape of a crutch, he sees the whole concept of life and death (Cowles, 1959:287).

It is possible to accept the iconography of Dali's work, without asking what each detail might mean. Yet it is known from his own account that there is evidence of a specific meaning behind most of the imagery that find its way into the paintings. Some, to which he attaches particular importance, are also unforgettable, like the crutches and limp watches. Others, whilst trying to come to terms with his neuroses, he put down on canvas. Grasshoppers, for which he had a morbid fear, were identified with dislike for his father. Ecrasement was seen as 'the terrorizing element'. Teeth are a Freudian sex symbol. Putrefaction had the hard light of gems. Death he saw as always being beautiful, just as eroticism must always be ugly. Implements, such as sharp instruments, are symbolic of mutilation. He considered that the three cardinal images of life were excrement, blood and putrefaction and he used them extensively in his work (Taschen, 1979:52).

7. DALI AND FREUD.

7.1 Freud on Art.

With the arts, Freud was at peace. One might almost say that he lived in longing admiration of them. To him, artistic works were, in this sense, 'harmless', because they had nothing to do with reality and consciously created only lovely illusions (Marcuse, 1958:1). But, in relegating the accomplishments of art to a sphere beyond reality, Freud failed to realize how strongly they have influenced man's picture of reality. According to Freud, the realm of fantasy gives us our only glimpses of a better world than the actual one. Man's desires (particularly his erotic and self-seeking ones), which are not able to achieve their aims in the harsher medium of reality, reach a modest fulfilment here. One is reminded of the familiar concept of catharsis when Freud finds the accomplishment of artistic creation is what he calls the freeing of instincts. The artist, then frees himself by giving shape and form to the instincts and desires which drive him, just as, one might say, the patient does in analysis (Marcuse: 3).

According to Freud, art arose as a substitute for instinct-satisfaction, 'protecting' men during their painful transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle. The most varied types took refuge in the general realm of fantasy; the paranoid, the neurotic, the dreamer, the pious, the speculative, as well as the artistic. The artist's place is however; a realm between what Freud called 'wish-denying reality' and the 'wish-fulfilling world of fantasy' - in other words, between the bitterness of daily existence and the even bitterer realm of delusion (Marcuse: 6).

7.2 Freudian Concepts in Dalinian Art.

There is little doubt that Freudian concepts such as free-association, hypnotism, dream narration, dream symbolism, condensation, displacement and sublimation also found fruitful and enticing parallels in Surrealist art. Dali was largely influenced by the writings of Freud, especially his monograph, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. As a result, Dali developed a theory that all images, even the most innocent had a hidden meaning. This, he substantiated with the development of a method which exhibited an affinity with the spontaneous realization of free association.

7.3 The Paranoiac-Critical Method: Dali's Interpretation of Free Association.

Dali has endowed Surrealism with an instrument of primary importance, specifically the paranoid-critical method, which has immediately shown itself capable of being applied with equal success to painting, poetry, the cinema, etc. (Ades, 1982:119). Dali had read Lacan's thesis on 'Paranoiac Psychosis in its Relation with the Personality' (1932) and welcomed Lacan's ideas as confirmation of his own and, as revelatory about the phenomenon of paranoia, as a 'total and homogenous idea' (Ades: 127). Freud's interior model was also instructive to Salvador in the development of his celebrated and much misunderstood method, a spontaneous combination of irrational associating based on the critical interpretive association of delirious phenomena. These, Wach says, owe their source to memories spontaneously arising from childhood, mundane objects or events that acted as triggers to a new and psychologically relevant view of the various associations (1992: 181). The aesthetic premise of paranoiac-critical methods stressed the self-conscious and neuritic aspect of automatists and psychological activity hence, the appellation critical in its definition (1993: 182). Ades (1982: 120), relates that the practice of paranoiac-criticism is an attempt at the 'critical and systematic objectification of delusions associations and interpretations, drawing on Dali's interest in psycho-analysis and demonstrating in a more general way the relationship between perception and mental states. Dali wrote (1933) 'The paranoiac activity offers us the possibility of the systemization of delirium. Paranoiac images are due to the delirium of interpretation. The delirium which in the dream, is wiped out on waking, really continues into these paranoiac images, and it is directly communicable to everybody (Ades: 124). In 'The Dali Case' (1936), Breton describes Dali's use of painting or other medium as a means of escaping repressive constraints, which would lead to psychosis (1982: 120). Many times Dali ends up with an objective interpretation of a painting based on his own personal neurotic sexual fear, or rather unexpectedly awakened memories of it (Ades: 144).

8. INTERPRETATION OF THE 'METAMORPHOSIS OF NARCISSUS'

'The Metamorphosis of Narcissus', uses repeated images of similar configuration, with interconnected significance. The importance Dali placed on this painting can be deduced from the fact that he wrote an elaborate poem to accompany it (Secrest: 173). This painting is fundamental to Dali's mentality, as it is widely known as his second self-portrait. If, as Kenneth Clark has written, 'all artists have an obsessive central experience round which their work takes shape' the, the omnipresent theme of the sea and reflection in this painting signifies Dali's inner quandaries (Secrest: 173).

The relationship between reality and illusion is perfectly embodied in the myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection and was drowned try to reach it (Ades: 133). The seated bowed figure of Narcissus becomes an ossified handholding a cracked egg from which springs a narcissus flower (Ades: 123). Dali constructed this image of a grandiose self to compensate for the freak he secretly believed himself to be. Within this perfectly realized and extraordinary painting, he expressed some deep truths about his state of mind. The bent shape of Narcissus, half-immersed in his pool of endless self-absorption, has, by a transmutation of genius, become the limestone sculpture of a hand (Secrest: 173). The man lost in helpless exploration of the waters of his subconscious, still bent under the weight of his inner load, was nevertheless flesh and blood, whereas the other half, the one referred to in the third person, that poor specimen carved out of rock, was the one that held the miraculous egg. I had lost the image of my being that had been stolen from me', Dali said.

8. CONCLUSION

So, it can be seen that the 'Metamorphosis of Narcissus' is the epitome` of Salvador Dali's major lifelong obsessional neurosis which centred on the idealization of his dead brother. His feelings of not being 'alive'; his morbid obsession with death; his narcissistic defences; his flamboyant exhibitionism; his gross eccentricity; all owe their origins to childhood experiences and his desire to come to terms with them. As a neurotic, Salvador Dali attempted to derive satisfaction from his actions, ideas and emotions in a sort of make believe world which sometimes made life very hard for him. As an artist, he had all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of illusion, because he could travel freely on the road from fantasy to reality.

Freud states that if the psychotic could also recognize make believe as make-believe, he would not be deluded and would no longer be a psychotic. In Freudian terms then, Salvador Dali, the artist was evidently a man who was better able than anyone else to get along with his troubles and, who was thus, not at all a 'genius' akin to the 'madman', as the old platitude has it (Marcluse: 6).

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