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The Vision of Reality as a Paradox: Salvador Dali's Creative Process from 1927 to 1939

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THE VISION OF REALITY AS A PARADOX: SALVADOR DALI'S CREATIVE
PROCESS FROM 1927 TO 1939

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Submitted to Scripps College in Partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Chapter One: Confronting Reality Through Cinema	16
Chapter Two: The Vision of Reality as a Dichotomy	31
Chapter Three: The Pursuit of an Irrational Reality	45
Conclusion: The Legacy of Dalí's Paranoid-Critical method	70
Images	75
Selected Bibliography	83
List of Illustrations	85

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An Introduction to Dalí's Creative Process from 1929-1939

On 21 March 1939, art enthusiasts in New York were distracted from the looming fear of a World War. It was the opening day of Salvador Dalí's solo exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery and, with the recent publicity surrounding Dalí's arrest, crowds gathered in front of the gallery's doors. Dalí had been arrested for tipping over a bathtub, which smashed the windows in the department store Bonwit-Teller; once he saw that his window display had been vandalized, he wanted to defend his work. After his release, the press had taken his side awaiting his exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery with enthusiasm. The doors finally opened and the crowds rushed in. *Life* magazine reported: "No exhibition had been so popular since Whistler's *Arrangement in Black and Grey No. I: The Artist's Mother* was shown in 1934. The crowd gaped open-mouthed at pictures with bewildering titles..."¹ With the success of this exhibit, only two paintings remained to be sold: *The Enigma of Hitler* (1936) and *The Endless Enigma* (1938).

At that time, Dalí thought that America was the only country that had an unusual degree of liberty, "for where one may dialogue with open scissors in one's hand there is healthy flesh to cut and liberty for all sorts of famines."² However, after his design for the 1939³ World's Fair was rejected, he realized that Americans were more interested in using his name for publicity purposes than truly exposing his imagination to the public.⁴

¹ Robert Descharnes and Gilles Néret, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989* (Los Angeles: Taschen, 2010) 122.

² Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life*, (1942) as quoted in *ibid.* p123.

³ For more information on Dalí and the 1939 World's Fair See Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, And Surrealist Exhibition Installations*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001).

⁴ For more information on Dalí's design, which was rejected for the World's Fair Robert Descharnes and Gilles Néret, *Salvador Dalí*, p122.

In response, Dalí published his *Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to His Own Madness* (1939).⁵ Within America, Dalí is often remembered as an entertaining character for his publicity stunts, attire and elaborate mustache. Less known is that Dalí was an intellectual and his artworks and writings reveal that his flamboyant persona was an intentional display for capturing the public's eye. Throughout his life, Dalí researched, developed his own ideas and gave form to them in various mediums; he created films, paintings, sculptures, furniture, fashion lines and even architecture.

From 1927 to 1939, Dalí went through an arduous artistic pursuit to visualize his perspective on reality. This study asserts that his investigation took him from the fragmented images of cinema to the metamorphic shapes of the 'soft and hard' and ultimately to a series of multiple images, which envisioned his paranoid-critical method. To illuminate Dalí's process this thesis will examine Dalí's infamous film *Un chien andalou* (1929), his iconic painting *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), and his under-appreciated masterpiece *The Endless Enigma* (1938), as he visually expressed his changes in thought most clearly and convincingly in these three works. Through a careful analysis of the way Dalí developed and visualized his ideas during this time, this study will reveal the synthetic aspect of his creative process, which he expressed in his writings and his art, culminating in his paranoid-critical method.

Other writers have found specific influences on Dalí's view on reality, but they provide only a partial understanding of Dalí's art and writing from this decade.

Beginning in 1930, Dalí embraced disparate ideas that he would ultimately connect into

⁵ Dalí, *Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to His Own Madness* (New York, 1939) Pamphlet written and published by Dalí.

his own vision of reality. Dawn Ades, Llorenç Bonet, and Christiane Weidemann relate Dalí's artwork and writing from the 1920s until World War II to his interest in psychoanalysis.⁶ Gavin Parkinson, on the other hand, interprets Dalí's surrealist art as rooted in *both* psychoanalysis and science. While a case can be made for each of these scholar's interpretations, there is more to Dalí's artwork than the influences of science and psychoanalysis. Even books that have been published recently, give new but limited viewpoints on Dalí's art. *Dalí & Film* (2007) analyzes the role of cinema in Dalí's career and *Persistence and Memory: New Critical Perspectives on Dalí at the Centennial* (2004) looks back at Dalí's overall contribution to the art world. Although scholars have shed light upon the content of Dalí's art, they offer a partial picture of the influences on Dalí's development in the 1930s, this study will attempt a more encompassing way for understanding Dalí's goals, which culminate in his paranoid-critical method and his masterpiece *The Endless Enigma*. The multiple images within *The Endless Enigma* are individual, complete and powerful; on their own they represent the multiple dimensions of reality, but they are all connected through the lens of paranoiac-criticism and Dalí's technical mastery.

The years from 1929 to 1939 were a time of exploration for Dalí, marked by his fascination with discoveries that contradicted his perception of reality. Dalí was attracted to both science and psychoanalysis during his childhood, but these ideas came to the forefront in 1929. In the early 1920s, Dalí was a student at the élite Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid and he had access to Freud's theories on psychoanalysis and

⁶ Dawn Ades, *Dalí: Works by Salvador Dalí*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1982), provides the most useful overview on how psychoanalysis influenced Dalí's life and artistic career

Albert Einstein's (1879-1955) Theory of Relativity.⁷ José Ortega's *Revista de Occidente*, a popular intellectual review with Spanish translations of Freud, was widely read at the Residencia. The Madrid Catholic daily newspaper, *El Debate*, contained summaries written by José M. Plans of Einstein's lectures. On 9 March 1923, Einstein even gave a lecture at the Residencia. Beginning in 1930, Dalí himself wrote of his interest in both psychoanalysis and science, from articles like "The Sanitary Goat" (1930) to his diary, *The Secret Life* (1942). In describing the Surrealists, Dalí said, "We are carnivorous fish, which, as I have already implied, swim between two waters, the cold water of art, and the warm water of science."⁸ Even though Ades and Weidemann argue that up until the Second World War, Dalí's chief interest was psychology and that he turned to the natural sciences thereafter, Dalí was clearly fascinated with both psychoanalysis and science from 1930 on.⁹

Beginning in 1929, Dalí's goal was to question reality and he would look to the findings of psychoanalysis and science to support his perspective on the world. In his 1930 article "The Rotting Donkey," Dalí wrote, "I believe that the moment is near when, through a process of thought of a paranoiac and active character, it will be possible to systematize confusion and contribute to the total discrediting of the world of reality."¹⁰ By 1930, Dalí knew he wanted to completely "discredit" the world and he saw Einstein's space-time and Freud's discovery of the unconscious as proof for the existence of a new

⁷ For more information on the theories that Dalí had access to as a student in Madrid see Gavin Parkinson, *Surrealism, Art and Modern Science: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Epistemology*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) p.179.

⁸ Dalí, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, as quoted in Parkinson p.191.

⁹ Ades, *Dalí*, p.173 and Christiane Weidemann, *Salvador Dalí*, (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2007) p.49.

¹⁰ Salvador Dalí, "The Rotting Donkey," as quoted in Ades, *Dalí* p.121.

dimension of experience. In 1933, Dalí found further evidence for his viewpoint in Jacques Lacan's (1901-1981) writings on paranoia. While Dalí wrote of and incorporated Einstein's, Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) and Lacan's ideas into his art, he came to his own conclusions on reality, which he gave form to in his paintings.

In 1929, Dalí began his decade-long artistic process and in that same year André Breton (1896-1966) welcomed him into the Surrealist movement. The last issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste*, which contained Breton's *Second Surrealist Manifesto* (1929), reproduced Dalí's paintings *Accommodations of Desire* (1929) and *Illumined Pleasures* (1929), as the first public sign of Dalí's affiliation with the group. With the *Second Manifesto*, Breton advocated for a pursuit of knowledge and, not unlike Dalí, hoped to confront reality.¹¹ In the early stage of their relationship, Dalí and Breton's goals seemed to be aligned, but throughout the 1930s they would grow apart. It would become clear that Dalí was on an individual path and in 1939 he was no longer a member of the Surrealist group.

Instead of trying to understand the human mind or the external world as Breton suggested, Dalí wanted to completely contradict reality, and he dedicated the decade of his 'Surrealist' years to achieving his goal. Although Dalí had a goal in 1929, his perspective on reality and how to express his ideas visually would take a decade to evolve. In the late 1920s, Dalí began with the notion that reality is not as it seems and he turned to the medium of film to demonstrate his idea. He grew up with the excitement of cinema and was fascinated with the potential of a camera to objectively capture

¹¹ For more information on Breton's *Second Surrealist Manifesto* see Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995)

something within reality and then distort it. In Dalí's first article exclusively on film, "Art Film, Antiartistic Film" (1927), he wrote that, "A lump of sugar on the screen can *become* larger than an infinite perspective of gigantic buildings."¹² With the techniques of slow motion, the close-up and a rapid montage, Dalí thought a film could transform the viewer's perception of reality. Even though Dalí maintained an interest in cinema throughout his life and worked on several projects from behind and in front of the camera, he became frustrated with the complicated production of filmmaking and was always a painter at heart.

Working in film; however, was Dalí's first step in his artistic pursuit and he would carry over what had appealed to him such as the objectivity of the camera and the process of transformation into his canvases. From the late 1920s to the early 1930s, Dalí experimented with collage and the morphological aesthetics of the 'soft and hard.' He created paintings with extreme technical exactness and represented figures that transformed from one object into another. At that time, Dalí was consumed with his belief that reality could be transformed, which he articulated in his writings and visualized on canvas.

In 1931 however, Dalí's understanding of the world changed and he saw reality as a dichotomy of the rational versus irrational. From 1931 to 1933, Dalí experimented with the visualization of his idea that reality is a dichotomy and continued to read and write about the discoveries in science and psychoanalysis that supported his perspective. With Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Freud's theories of psychoanalysis, Dalí saw proof for an 'irrational' dimension of experience that exists at the same time as the 'rational'

¹² Dalí, "Art Film, Antiartistic Film," as quoted in Mathew Gale, ed., *Dali & film* (London: Tate Publishing exh. cat., 2007), p.72.

experience of daily life. Therefore, Dalí went beyond questioning reality with cinema, and worked to envision the dichotomy of his ‘new’ world. Not unlike the Surrealist painters Yves Tanguy (1900-1955) and André Masson (1896-1987), Dalí explored the aesthetics of the ‘soft and hard,’ but only as a part of his quest against reality.

By 1933, Dalí’s comprehension of the world had changed again, although it would be two years until he fully realized his new outlook. In 1935, Dalí wrote *The Conquest of the Irrational*, an elaborate text, which exposed his new perspective on reality and how it could be envisioned. In *The Conquest of the Irrational*, Dalí clarified that his goal was to “...materialize the images of concrete irrationality with the most imperialist fury of precision.”¹³ After absorbing Lacan’s theories of psychoanalysis, Dalí believed that the world is made up of several simultaneous realities; in which many ideas can and do exist at the same time. For that reason, from 1935 through 1938, Dalí’s artwork was no longer about representing a dichotomy; instead, he wanted to visualize reality as a paradox through multiple co-existing images.¹⁴ With the outbreak of the civil war in 1936, Dalí found further support for his belief in the irrationality of the world, although he was distracted from his ultimate artistic goal and forced to leave his home in Spain. Upon his return in 1938 to Port Lligat, Dalí was able to complete his series of multiple images, which was the final stage of the artistic pursuit he began in 1929.

Dalí’s decade-long process was an inter-connected visual and verbal pursuit, during which he went from confronting reality to accepting that the world is an irrational paradox. Ades and Parkinson provide valid but limited interpretations for Dalí’s art from

¹³ Dalí, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.121.

¹⁴ The idea that Dalí saw reality as a *paradox* developed from discussions with Professor MacNaughton from Scripps College.

this decade, because they focus on the elements of psychoanalysis or science in his works. Haim Finkelstein, on the other hand, understands that Dalí's vision was unique and formed from a connected process of three stages. However, Finkelstein emphasizes the theoretical framework behind Dalí's painting over his underlying goal to envision a new world.¹⁵ Moreover, all of these scholars, though experts on Dalí's work, are not unlike the art enthusiasts who went to the Julien Levy Gallery on 21 March 1939, in that they have undervalued Dalí's process, in particular how it resulted in his masterpiece *The Endless Enigma* (1938). Even the more recent texts on Dalí tend to misjudge this complex artwork. Although Marc LaFountain wrote a book, *Dalí and Post Modernism: This is not an Essence*, which promotes understanding of this painting, he overlooks Dalí's inter-connected stages that culminated in this masterpiece.¹⁶

Beginning in 1929, Dalí set out to interrogate reality, even though he was not yet sure of how to accomplish his goal. He worked through his ideas in his writings and experimented with different mediums and artistic styles. As his perspective on the world changed, so did his means for visualizing it. Through a decade of investigation, Dalí developed a unique method for viewing reality and he expressed his complete idea on canvas with *The Endless Enigma*, which gave form to his paranoid-critical method.

¹⁵ Haim Finkelstein is an important scholar for this study. His book provides a useful overview of Dalí's art and writing throughout his life: Haim Finkelstein, *Salvador Dalí's Art and Writing 1927-1942: The Metamorphoses of Narcissus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) Finkelstein's article ("The Three Arenas of Paranoia-Criticism) in: Hank Hine, William Jeffett, and Kelly Reynolds, eds., *Persistence and Memory: New Critical Perspectives on Dalí at the Centennial*, (St. Petersburg, Florida: The Salvador Dalí Museum exh. cat., 2004) p59-69. provides a clear analysis of Dalí's development of Paranoid criticism

¹⁶ Marc J. LaFountain, *Dali and Postmodernism: This Is Not an Essence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997)

Dalí's creation of paranoiac-criticism was arguably his greatest contribution to the Surrealist movement, though it is also his most complex and often misunderstood idea. Even Dalí was unsure of his own method until 1935. He wrote in his diary *The Secret Life* (1942):

Some actually asked me to enlighten them on the "critical-paranoiac method," and read my articles in which this was all beginning to be more or less hermetically explained. But I confess that I myself at this period did not know exactly whereof this famous critical-paranoiac method which I had invented consisted. It "exceeded" me, and like all the important things which I have "committed," I was begin to understand it only a few years after I had laid its foundations.¹⁷

Dalí laid the foundations for his method in his 1933 article "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," but only began to understand it in 1935. Dalí's *The Conquest of the Irrational* (1935) was his most elaborate written explanation for his method and he distinguished between 'paranoia' and 'paranoiac-critical' activity. He defined paranoia as a "delirium of interpretative association involving a systematic structure" and paranoiac-critical activity as a "spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretative-critical association of delirium phenomena."¹⁸ Dalí saw paranoia as a controllable way of using the unconscious to view the world and paranoiac-critical activity as a method for employing the paranoiac capacity of the mind to make seemingly irrational connections with an external reality. Finkelstein explains the paranoiac-critical process by writing: "The paranoiac delirium associates different realities by exploring them irrationally, and forms a systematic

¹⁷ Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, Translated by Haakon M. Chevalier, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993) p.312.

¹⁸ Dalí, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, as quoted in Finkelstein *Dalí's Art and Writing*, p.187.

structure that, in itself, is an interpretation of these elements in the context of the new relationships formed between them.”¹⁹ In other words, Dalí’s paranoiac process connects various realities by interpreting the multiple dimensions of the world irrationally.

Dalí had been interested in paranoia since his 1930 article “The Rotting Donkey,” and found support for his reading of the phenomena in Lacan’s writings of the time. Instead of viewing paranoia as a mental illness or a hallucination, Dalí referred to paranoia as “reasoning madness” and stated, “The only difference between myself and a madman is that I am not mad.”²⁰ By working through his understanding of his own paranoia, Dalí could develop a method for interpreting the paradox of reality irrationally and give form to his ideas through multiple co-existing images. Paranoiac-criticism was the summation of Dalí’s thoughts on reality; his method was so important to him that he wanted to make it a movement in its own right. Although the project was not realized, he drew up plans for a magazine called *Movement Paranoyaque* for which he would be the sole editor.²¹

In 1938, paranoiac-criticism would be Dalí’s ultimate tool for visualizing his ‘new’ world, but first he had to develop his perspective, create a method for viewing the reality he believed in and find a way to express his ideas on canvas. By reading about the findings of Freud, Einstein and Lacan, Dalí discovered proof for the existence of multiple realities. He did not pass judgment on which theory was superior; he thought that each

¹⁹ Finkelstein, *Dalí’s Art and Writing*, p.187.

²⁰ Dalí defined paranoia as ‘reasoning madness’ in his article, “The Rotting Donkey,” as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.122, Dalí stated “The only difference between myself and a madman is that I am not mad” at the opening of his 1934 exhibition in Paris, as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.119.

²¹ For information on Dalí’s *Movement Paranoyaque* see Dawn Ades ed., *Dalí’s Optical Illusions*, (Hartford, Conn.: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art exh. cat., 2000) p.112.

idea from relativity to psychoanalysis exists in the world with equal significance at the same time. For that reason, Dalí found no purpose in trying to use either psychoanalysis or science to try and rationalize the human psyche or the external world. He accepted and admired reality for how complex and multifaceted it is and he encouraged others to do the same. The paranoid-critical method was Dalí's way of viewing the intricate paradox that he believed in. Dalí's method was not about understanding the irrationalities of humanity as Breton had hoped to achieve with automatism and the study of dreams. Paranoiac-criticism was a way for the mind to make irrational connections between the elements of reality that all exist individually and simultaneously.

From 1929 through 1939, Dalí's changes in thought paralleled the changes in his art. Therefore, it is possible to separate his ten-year process into three inter-connected stages. In 1929, Dalí began his artistic pursuit with the medium of film. It was a logical starting point considering his fascination with the camera and his initial interest in confronting reality. He made a few attempts at a double image in 1930 as a representation of his own paranoia, since he was not yet sure of how the concept could be used to contradict reality. In the early 1930s, Dalí turned to the aesthetics of the 'soft and hard'; he created paintings that reflected his belief that reality was a dichotomy. Upon laying the foundations for his method in 1933, Dalí made a series of Anthropomorphic Landscapes as an effort to transfer paranoiac-criticism to a canvas, by 1935; however, Dalí saw the world as a paradox made up of complete and equally powerful ideas. The 1938 series of multiple co-existing images, was Dalí's artistic expression of the ideas that had been consuming him since 1929. After Dalí completed this series, his life moved in a different direction, which was prompted by World War II and his displacement from

Europe to the United States. He never abandoned his paranoid-critical method, but after achieving the visualization of his goals, Dalí could stop painting multiple images and turn to new interests in America.

Although Dalí's paranoid-critical method has been widely admired, the decade-long process that Dalí went through to achieve his culminating artistic statement *The Endless Enigma* (1938) has not been carefully analyzed for the way in which it synthesized ideas from his writings and art. In order for *The Endless Enigma* to get the credit that it deserves, Dalí's artistic pursuit, which began over ten years prior to this painting's creation must be broken apart and understood in the terms of Dalí's goal to discredit the world of singular reality and to assert a vision of multiple co-existing realities. With *The Endless Enigma*, Dalí encouraged viewers to make irrational connections between the six individual dimensions that form the piece. For Dalí, *The Endless Enigma*, not unlike the multiple dimensions of reality, must be viewed through the various perspectives of paranoiac-criticism.

To illuminate Dalí's creative process from 1929 through 1939, this study is separated into three chapters that focus on *Un Chien andalou* (1929), *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) and *The Endless Enigma* (1938) respectively. While some of Dalí's other paintings and writings of the time will be discussed, these three works are the hallmarks of the stages of Dalí's development. Each one is a powerful visual expression of Dalí's thoughts on reality at the time of their creation.

Confronting Reality Through Cinema: Dalí's Artwork and Writings from 1927 to 1930

On June 6, 1929 a select group of art-film enthusiasts anxiously waited in the intimate quarters of a screening room in Paris. The lights dimmed, the room silenced and the screen lit up with the sole phrase “Once upon a time.” As audience members were on the edge of their seats, a middle-aged man, instantly recognized by many as Luis Buñuel, sharpened his razor and tested it on his thumb. Buñuel gazed out at an ominous moon being engulfed by a cloud, setting the pace for what was to come. The image cut to a close-up of a young woman calmly staring out at the audience. As the people in the theatre gripped the sides of their chairs, the woman’s eye was methodically slit open. With no escape, the audience was confronted with a parallel reality, an alternative to the rationality of their daily lives. This was only the introductory scene of *Un Chien andalou* (1929), a sixteen-minute film that would be declared a turning point in cinematic history by the leading film critics of the time.²²

Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel (1900-1983) were the collaborators behind this provocative artwork, which brought the film and its creators overnight notoriety. Dalí and Buñuel benefited from the overall success of the film despite their disapproval of some of the public’s reactions. In his writings, Dalí expressed his concerns with certain interpretations of the film, while attempting to explain the real goals behind the making of *Un Chien andalou*. 1929, the year the film was released, was a time when the public was looking for a new way of viewing the world and Dalí was one of the intellectuals at the forefront of this search. Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis and Einstein’s studies of space-time had profoundly changed the common awareness of reality, and it was this

²² Christiane Weidemann, *Salvador Dalí* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2007) p.20

kind of shocking discovery that Dalí was seeking when creating *Un Chien andalou*.

However, Dalí wrote how *Un Chien andalou* did not accomplish his artistic goals in *The*

Secret Life (1942):

*Le Chien andalou...now seemed to me to be a complete failure, and if I had owned it and had had it in my possession at this moment I would have suppressed it without a moment's hesitation. It seemed to me that it needed at least a half a dozen more rotten donkeys, that the roles of the actors were lamentable, and that the scenario itself was full of poetic weakness*²³

Dalí thought *Un Chien andalou* was a “complete failure” because of how the public received it. In his 1929 article “*Un Chien andalou*,” Dalí asserted, “This public...has understood nothing of the moral basis of the film, which is aimed directly against it, with a total violence and cruelty.”²⁴ With the public’s overall praise of the artistry behind the film and their relative obliviousness to its deeper meaning, it is no wonder that Dalí was less than thrilled with the public’s perception.

With *Un Chien andalou*, Dalí began his serious pursuit of a visual representation of a new world. By capturing an alternate reality through cinema, Dalí questioned viewers’ certainty of their surroundings. In the late 1920s, Dalí looked to Freud’s analysis of dreams for evidence of a new dimension of experience beyond what the conscious mind was aware of. Therefore, from 1927 through 1929, Dalí explored the capability of the camera to reveal a ‘new’ reality and his writings and artworks from that time expose his fascination with cinema and Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis. By 1930; however, Dalí discovered further proof of a parallel reality in Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. Dalí found the common ground between Einstein and Freud’s theories in that

²³ Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life*, p215.

²⁴ Dalí, “*Un Chien andalou*” (1929) as quoted in Matthew Gale, ed., *Dalí and Film*, p91.

they both contradict the perceived reality of daily life. Dalí's art from the late 1920s can be related to psychoanalysis, but from 1930 on, with his article "The Sanitary Goat" (1930) and his diary *The Secret Life* (1942), Dalí wrote of and was clearly drawn to the findings of both Freud and Einstein. For Dalí, film, psychoanalysis and science provide new means for viewing reality, but he envisioned his own perspective on the world in his art. This chapter will analyze Dalí's film *Un Chien andalou* (1929) and his paintings *Cenicitas* (1928), *Illumined Pleasures* (1929), and *The First Days of Spring* (1929), as along with his writings from 1927 through 1930, Dalí gave form to his viewpoint on reality at the time in these artworks.

Dalí began his decade-long process to represent his 'new' world with film, because at the time he thought it was the best medium for achieving his artistic goals. Dalí grew up with the excitement of film, and before teaming up with Buñuel he wrote in depth about its promise as a medium. In his first article exclusively on film, "Art Film, Antiartistic Film" (1927) Dalí explained that film revealed "...the entirely new poetic emotion of all the most humble and immediate facts, which were impossible to imagine or foresee before cinema."²⁵ Dalí's article exposed his attraction to the objective vision of the camera. He had discovered the camera's ability to directly capture something that existed in the world while simultaneously distorting it. For Dalí, The transmutation could be achieved with techniques such as the close-up and slow motion, which would alter the viewer's perception of reality, as a film could turn an everyday object into something spectacular.

²⁵ Salvador Dalí, "Art Film, Antiartistic Film," as quoted in Gale p.73

In the late 1920s, Dalí preferred the factual vision of the medium of film above the symbolic nature of painting. He compared the two mediums in his article “Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind” (1927) by writing that, “The world of cinema and the world of painting are very different; clearly, the possibilities of photography and cinema are to be found in that unlimited imagination which is born of things themselves.”²⁶ In creating a film, Dalí could use his visual and verbal skills in service of his imagination, while maintaining the objective poetry of facts. There was no need for symbolism or the invention of something that did not already exist, only what was present and the camera to capture it. With film’s introduction of a new way of looking, it became the logical avenue for Dalí to begin his artistic quest. He even threatened to abandon painting entirely in 1929 by illustrating his final issue of *L’Amic de les Arts* with photographs only. He justified this in a Catalan review from the same year, by writing:

*Photographic data...is still and essentially the safest poetic medium and the most agile process for catching the most delicate osmoses which exist between reality and super-reality... the capture of a secret reality. Nothing proves the truth of super-realism so much as photography.*²⁷

This quote clarifies Dalí’s belief in the camera’s capacity to capture a parallel reality. Dalí would make the *verbal* from his research and writings on the medium of film and Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis, *visual* in the ‘secret reality’ of *Un Chien andalou* through the narrative, close-ups and imagery.

In the 1929 article, “Notes on the Making of *Un Chien andalou*,” Buñuel described the creative process that he went through with Dalí to make the film. Although Buñuel asserted that, “Nothing in the film symbolizes anything,” he wrote that, “The only

²⁶ Dalí, “Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind,” as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.47.

²⁷ Dalí, “Reality and Surreality,” as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.55.

method of investigation of the symbols would be, perhaps, psychoanalysis.”²⁸ Buñuel, tried to deny any deeper meaning of the film, while still admitting to the existence of psychoanalysis within it. Buñuel further explained,

*In the working out of the plot every idea of a rational, aesthetic or other preoccupation with technical matters was rejected as irrelevant. The result is a film deliberately anti-plastic, anti-artistic, considered by traditional canons. The plot is the result of a conscious psychic automatism, and, to that extent, it does not attempt to recount a dream, although it profits by a mechanism analogous to dreams*²⁹

In an effort to make a film purely based on the automatic flow of thoughts, which is the type of flow that also occurs in dreams, Dalí and Buñuel tried to discard any ideas for scenes that were from their own memories or culture.

Dalí also denied the connection to psychoanalysis in *Un Chien andalou*, although in his personal diary, *The Secret Life* (1942), he discussed the significance that Freud’s theories of dreams had on him. Dalí explained that Freud’s book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) was one of the “capital discoveries” of his life.³⁰ Despite Dalí’s acknowledgement of Freud’s dream-work, he emphasized his and Buñuel’s lack of aesthetic preoccupation when they created *Un Chien andalou*. In 1929, Dalí wrote of how the film was a notation of facts, “... real facts, hence irrational, incoherent and without any explanation.”³¹ Dalí denied a deeper meaning, as he was primarily concerned with the objectivity of film. In contradiction, Dalí also wrote about how *Un Chien andalou*, “...would carry each member of the audience back to the secret depth of

²⁸ Luis Buñuel, “Notes on the Making of *Un Chien andalou*” (1929) as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p50.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Dalí, *The Secret Life*, as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p74.

³¹ Haim Finkelstein, *Art and Writing 1927-1942* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.96.

adolescence, to the sources of dreams, destiny and the secret of life and death...”³² This quote, along with Buñuel’s article prove that the film was rooted in psychoanalysis, even if only subliminally, as Dalí directly referenced childhood memories and dreams, which were key concepts in Freud’s theories.³³

Dawn Ades, Matthew Gale and Stuart Liebmann dissect the influence that Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis had on the narrative of *Un Chien andalou*.³⁴ Ades writes,

*The rapid montage sequences in the film achieve just that effect of a reverie rooted in the world of objects, one image leading to another...the element of transformation in such sequences is paradoxical, for each image remains at the same time absolute, not a simile.*³⁵

In other words, the film’s quick transformations reflect the inconsistent structure of a dream and the individual scenes of *Un Chien andalou* are not an allegory; rather the manifest content of the dreamers’ (Dalí and Buñuel) unconscious. Like Ades, Gale interprets the film’s lack of a logical sequential narrative furthered by the puzzling inter-titles, “Once upon a time,” “Twelve years earlier” and “In Springtime,” as parallel to a dream. Gale clarifies, “...the deliberate undermining of a sequential logic opens the film to multiple memories or reconstructions for the audience. In this sense, although distinguished by its slippery nature, it parallels a dream narrative.”³⁶ Gale views a dream-like narrative in *Un Chien andalou* that is formed by the audience’s experience of the film, not by the creators, which Ades suggests.

³² Dalí, “*Un Chien Andalou*,” (1929) as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.50.

³³ For more information on Freud’s analysis of dreams see: Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1965) 55-91.

³⁴ For a group of articles discussing the influence of Freud that are written by various scholars see Rudolf Kuenzli E. ed, *Dada and Surrealist Film* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996).

³⁵ Ades, *Dalí*, p51.

³⁶ Gale ed., *Dalí & Film*, p.89.

Stuart Liebmann came to an equally valid conclusion about the film's construction being tied to Freud. According to Liebmann, the sequences of *Un Chien andalou* came from "...finding visual forms for verbal expressions."³⁷ Despite the overall silence of the film, Liebmann argues that the imagery in *Un Chien andalou* was a visualization of the wordplay of Freud:

*It seems certain in any case that the two Spaniards [Dalí and Buñuel] were fascinated by the mechanism Freud himself called 'the most psychologically interesting achievement of the dream-work,' namely, the transformation of a latent verbal thought through manifest visual images*³⁸

Dalí and Buñuel might have, as Liebmann advances, developed the narrative and imagery of *Un Chien andalou* through Freudian wordplay. No matter the specific technique that Dalí and Buñuel used, it is clear that their reading of Freud's theories influenced their creation of *Un Chien andalou*.

Furthermore, the themes of eroticism, death and decay, which are evident in the imagery of *Un Chien andalou* can be related to Freud's theories of psychoanalysis. The eroticism is directly visible through female nudity and suggested by the woman that leaves her husband for another man. The themes of death and decay were demonstrated in the scene with the ants crawling from the man's palm and the scene with the rotting donkeys that are laid out on a piano. In a 1929 article for *L'Amic de les Arts*, Dalí wrote of his fascination on encountering a corpse of a donkey that was covered with flies.³⁹

³⁷ Kuenzli E. ed, *Dada and Surrealist Film*, p.145.

³⁸ Stuart Liebman, "Un Chien andalou: The Talking Cure," found in Kuenzli E. ed, *Dada and Surrealist Film*, p144.

³⁹ Dalí, "L'allibements dels dits," *L'Amic de les Arts* (1929) as cited in Gale ed., *Dalí and Film*, p86.

Dalí incorporated imagery in *Un Chien andalou* that was rooted in his own experiences with sexuality and decay, and it is arguable that Dalí brought these themes to the forefront in the film and would continue to do so in his subsequent paintings because of his interest in Freud's theories.

The medium of film appealed to Dalí throughout his life as he proposed documentaries, sketched out scenarios and actually went to work in Hollywood in 1939. Though *Un Chien andalou* was the only film that Dalí was given due credit for and that was completed and released during his lifetime, he worked on various projects from behind and in front of the camera.⁴⁰ Beyond developing and writing about scenarios, Dalí also incorporated film into his paintings. Before making *Un Chien andalou* Dalí was frustrated with the symbolism of painting, but after he created the film Dalí wanted to transfer the filmic way of seeing into his canvases.

Dalí wrote about his goals for the paintings he made before *Un Chien andalou* in his 1929 article "My Pictures at the Autumn Salon." Dalí clarified that he tried to paint in the most natural manner possible so that the imagery would be comprehensible to children and people who looked with "pure" eyes.⁴¹ Dalí pursued this uncontaminated way of viewing in his paintings, while maintaining that only the camera could fully accomplish this. He also attempted to convey the process of transformation on a canvas, which was achievable in cinema through montage.

Dalí's painting *Cenicitas* (1928) reveals his effort to incorporate the objective vision of the camera and the cinematic technique of a rapid montage before he completed *Un Chien andalou*. The central figure in *Cenicitas* is a large anamorphic torso, bristling

⁴⁰ To read more about the film projects Dalí worked on see Gale ed., *Dalí & Film*, p160.

⁴¹ Dalí, "My Pictures at the Autumn Salon," as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.46.

with strokes of color. Some strokes represent underarm hair, while others just look like bristles. Ades asserts that, “This is an attempt to realize on canvas the kind of chain images already described from ‘Dues Proses’ or *Un Chien andalou*, where for example a woman’s armpit hairs dissolve to sea-urchin spines.”⁴² The torso demonstrates a pictorial transformation, which Dalí hoped to capture on canvas in 1928, but was visually more suited for cinema through the use of rapid montage.

Along with the ‘pure’ vision and the representation of the process of transformation in *Cenicitas*, the individual figures in the painting can also be related to *Un Chien andalou*. The symbolism in *Cenicitas* marked the beginning of Dalí’s incorporation of a personal iconography influenced by psychoanalysis that he was developing at the time and would continue to use in his subsequent works. In *Cenicitas*, the skeletal form of a donkey crosses the boundary of the horizon, which represents the theme of decay. A corpse of a donkey was similarly shown in a scene from *Un Chien andalou*. Therefore, *Cenicitas* refutes Dalí’s discussion of the lack of aesthetic preoccupation in *Un Chien andalou*.

Like the narrative of the film, the layout of *Cenicitas* could have also been influenced by Freud’s analysis of dreams. The cluttering of biomorphic and even transparent forms on the surface of an unfocused composition was a tendency of Dalí’s in 1928, evident in the contradiction of the ambiguous objects from the lower half of *Cenicitas*, with the technically perfect ones such as the nude torso. While some objects are lucidly depicted, others are only rough sketches. The colors add to this effect with the grey below the horizon line and the vivid blue above, forming a reverie of sea and sky.

⁴² Ades, *Dalí*, p56.

The opposition of colors and forms in *Cenicitas* hints at the inconsistency of a dream, during which some moments are vibrant and others are random and confusing. The combination of organic morphology and an indefinite setting recalls the Freudian unconscious. With the organization of *Cenicitas*, Dalí demonstrated the free-flow of thoughts in a dream.

In the late 1920s, Dalí incorporated filmic techniques and psychoanalysis into his paintings, in an effort to objectively portray the alternate reality of a dream. However, the varied styles of Dalí's paintings from the late 1920s demonstrate how he was not satisfied with the medium of painting at the time; consequently, he temporarily abandoned it and made the film *Un Chien andalou*. However, Dalí brought what he learned from working on the film to his later 1929 artworks, such as *The First Days of Spring* (1929) and *Illumined Pleasures* (1929), by portraying dramatic vistas interspersed with human characters and incorporating collage elements.

Dalí incorporated collage elements into his paintings *The First Days of Spring* and *Illumined Pleasures* as a part of his interest in photography and as a way to toy with the viewer. Both paintings have to be studied closely to separate what is painted from what is not. Within *Illumined Pleasures* specifically, there is a black and white print of part of a church façade enclosed by a painted frame. Through collage, Dalí attempted to transfer the technique of splicing scenes, which he discovered with *Un Chien andalou*.

Along with the techniques that Dalí carried over from film into his collage paintings, Dalí also abandoned the abstraction of *Cenicitas* (1928) in favor of depicting human characters in psychological dramas. Ades attributes the change in Dalí's art in 1929 to "...his discovery of ways of using his extensive readings in psycho-analytical

textbooks, of finding visual equivalents for that material and combining it with the very personal imagery that had begun to appear in the earlier paintings.”⁴³ Haim Finkelstein similarly attests that, “...only the coming to terms in 1929 with the psychological motivation lying behind [Dalí’s] imagery, and an acceptance of their personal implications for himself, allowed him to develop a style that was uniquely his own.”⁴⁴ In 1929 Dalí accepted the influence psychoanalysis had on his life, which was possible due to his understanding of Freud’s theories and how Dalí could give form to the parallel reality of the dream.

Dalí repeated symbols with technical exactness in *The First Days of Spring* (1929) and *Illumined Pleasures* (1929) so that his iconography, not unlike in *Cenicitas* could be recognizable and ‘pure.’ Ades writes that Dalí was “treating the iconography of the science of psycho-analysis as though it were common property.”⁴⁵ Dalí wanted the viewer to be able to interpret his artworks by making unexpected connections between the symbols. For example, Dalí discussed the grasshopper, which is attached to the mouth of the man in the foreground of *The First Days of Spring* as a memory in his diary *The Secret Life* (1942). Dalí discussed how he loved grasshoppers as a child until he caught a slimy fish, which he called a “slobberer” and discovered it had the same face as a grasshopper giving him a “phobia for grasshoppers” from that point on.⁴⁶ Dalí experienced the anxiety brought on by grasshoppers in his dream, which he then transferred to the canvas of *The First Days of Spring*.

⁴³ Ibid p70.

⁴⁴ Finkelstein, *Dalí’s Art and Writing*, p.51.

⁴⁵ Ades, *Dalí*, p.76.

⁴⁶ Dalí, *The Secret Life*, as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.71

Beyond Dalí's development and use of a personal iconography in his paintings from the late 1920s, Dalí also established a new dream-like setting. The background of *The First Days of Spring* is ambiguous with the ghostly coloring of the canvas and the seemingly limitless perspective that reaches deep into the background. The effect is emphasized with the presence of minute figures off in the distance. Therefore, the layout of *The First Days of Spring* demonstrates the dreaming mind at work even more so than the grouping of figures in *Cenicitas*. While dreams may be perceived as random images without meaning, each component is significant and related to one another and the dreamer.

In 1930, only a year after completing *The First Days of Spring* and *Illumined Pleasures*, Dalí's opinion on the superiority of the medium of film was deeply changed. Dalí realized that the gap between his artistic goals for the medium of film and the actual demands of the industry was growing. His artworks and writings from that year show his disappointment in film and his preference for the medium of painting to visualize his 'new' world. Even though *Un Chien andalou* was a necessary first step for Dalí in discovering a way of representing his ideas and the medium of film would continue to allure him, he expressed his frustration with the complex production behind its creation.

In 1930, Dalí explained:

*I don't believe that cinema can ever become an artistic form. It is a secondary form because too many people are involved in its creation. The only true means of producing a work of art is painting, in which only the eye and the point of the brush are employed.*⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Dalí quoted by James Bigwood, 'Cinquante ans de Cinema Dalinien', as cited in Ades ed. *Dalí's Optical Illusions* (Hartford, Conn.: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art exh. cat., 2000) p16.

This quote reiterates Dalí's new negation of film; and considering how independent an individual he was, this changed outlook was inevitable.

In 1930, Dalí also found new evidence for the existence of an alternate reality through Einstein's theory of relativity, which resulted in the next step of his creative process. Dalí could have read Spanish translations of Einstein's theory of relativity and of Freud's theories of psychoanalysis, as early as 1922. Jose Órtega introduced relativity and psychoanalysis in a comprehensible way through his widely read *Revista de Occidente*.⁴⁸ Einstein even spoke at Dalí's school, the elite Residencia de Estudiantes, on March 9, 1923. Even if Dalí did not see this first hand, the event would have generated an enthusiasm for Einstein and his theory. While Dalí was interested in both psychoanalysis and science at an early age, his artwork from the late 1920s revealed a greater awareness of Freud than Einstein. This could be attributed to the more complicated nature of Einstein's theories and the difficulty in making them comprehensible to the public. However, from 1930 onward, Dalí's artwork and writings demonstrate his improved understanding of physics. Dalí would combine his knowledge of Relativity with his already established comprehension of psychoanalysis and use both as evidence for co-existing realities.

In 1930, Dalí wrote "The Sanitary Goat" (1930), which exposed his fascination with the new dimension of experience proven by Relativity. Relativity, as British astrophysicist and popular science writer Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) described in *Space Time and Gravitation* of 1920, contrasted the reality that was experienced through

⁴⁸ For more information on Freud's introduction to the theory of relativity see Gavin Parkinson, *Surrealism, Art and Modern Science: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics, Epistemology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 177-200.

the senses with a newly uncovered one.⁴⁹ Eddington proposed a similar discovery in 1918 through the subjection of bodies to relativity that then became the “...*real* world, strangely different from the world of appearance.” With “The Sanitary Goat” (1930), Dalí hoped to contradict the ‘reality’ of daily life with Einstein’s theory of relativity. Dalí clarified that what the public understood as real through the senses could no longer be trusted. He wrote that, “The new geometry of poetic thought demands a physical revision and accommodation of the order of those to which Einsteinian physics subjects all measurements.”⁵⁰ Dalí fought for the replacement of what was commonly accepted as reality with what was actually proven by the theory of relativity. He continued to argue that the discoveries in the physical sphere through physics could also explain the inner-workings of the mind: “Just as we should count upon the physical dilation of measurements whether common or not, we must count, in parallel or not, on the psychic dilation of ideas.” Dalí referred to the accepted findings of Freud in the unconscious and directly related the inner-workings of the mind to Einstein’s research of space-time.

Even though it was only in 1930 that Dalí began writing about and directly incorporating Relativity into his art, Gavin Parkinson interprets Dalí’s paintings from the late 1920s as representations of Einstein’s ‘new’ world. Parkinson discusses an artistic trend of the time, in which many artists visually exaggerated the forces of Relativity so that they would be visible to the naked eye. Dalí’s use of anamorphic forms, as in *Cenicitas*, might be attributed to this. While Ades and Finkelstein view *Cenicitas* as a depiction of the dream world of Freud, Parkinson argues that the painting could have

⁴⁹ Jose Órtega was a Spanish popularizer of science who is written about in Parkinson, p178.

⁵⁰ Dalí, ‘The Sanitary Goat’ (1930) as quoted in Parkinson, p180.

been a representation of the new world of Einstein, in which objects were subjected to the forces of relativity. In regard to Dalí's incorporation of collage in *The First Days of Spring* (1929) and *Illumined Pleasures* (1929), Parkinson contends that the multiple frames within the image might have been "...very 'literal' renderings of the metaphorically termed 'multiple frames of reference' posited by Relativity physics."⁵¹ Ades, on the other hand, interprets the boxed pictures-within-a-picture structure as acting as "...snapshots of 'dream images'."⁵² Parkinson further compared what was considered the dream-like temporality of this painting with what could have instead been a representation of Einstein's space-time. While Parkinson's argument is a difficult one to prove for Dalí's paintings from the late 1920s, by 1930, when Dalí comments on Einstein in the "the Sanitary Goat," Dalí undoubtedly looked to Einstein's theory of relativity.

While Ades writes in depth of Dalí's use of psychoanalysis and Parkinson of his incorporation of science, by 1930, Dalí's artwork was not a representation of the dream world from Freud's theories or Einstein's Theory of Relativity. For Dalí, the findings of both Freud and Einstein were individually impactful on how he would view the world. However, from 1930 on, Dalí would give form to his *own* perspective on reality in his paintings.

⁵¹ Parkinson p.184.

⁵² Ades, *Dalí: Works by Salvador Dalí*, p.83.

The Vision of Reality as a Dichotomy in The Persistence of Memory (1931)

We had topped off our meal with a very strong Camembert, and after everyone had gone I remained for a long time seated at the table meditating on the philosophic problems of the 'super-soft' which the cheese presented to my mind. I got up and went into my studio, where I lit the light in order to cast a final glance, as is my habit, at the picture I was in the midst of painting... I knew that the atmosphere which I had succeeded in creating with this landscape was to serve as a setting for some idea, for some surprising image, but I did not in the least know what it was going to be. I was about to turn out the light, when instantaneously I 'saw' the solution... When Gala returned from the theatre two hours later the picture, which was to be one of my most famous, was completed. I made her sit down in front of it with her eyes shut: 'one, two, three, open your eyes!'... 'Do you think that in three years you will have forgotten this image?' Gala responded, "No one can forget it once he has seen it."⁵³

The painting that Dalí created was *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), and Gala was correct in that it would not be easily forgotten. Upon its completion, the painting was shown at the Pierre Colle Gallery in Paris and it was the only artwork illustrated in the catalogue for the exhibition. New York art dealer Julien Levy paid Colle \$250 for the painting and then lent it to museum director Chick Austin to be used as the centerpiece for the 1930 *Newer Super-Realism* exhibit he put on at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut.⁵⁴ The painting went back and forth between Levy and Austin, playing a large part in the first major New York showing of the surrealists in 1934, until Alfred Barr purchased it for the Museum of Modern Art.⁵⁵

⁵³ Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1993) 317.

⁵⁴ Chick Austin was the director of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford and Julien Levy was a dealer and art collector in New York, both were avid supporters of Dalí's art, they are discussed in Dawn Ades ed, *Dalí's Optical Illusions* exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 44.

⁵⁵ For more information on the transference of *The Persistence of Memory* until its end location at the Museum of Modern art see Dawn Ades ed, *Dalí's Optical Illusions* p.44.

The Persistence of Memory continues to be significant today and is widely recognized as one of Dalí's masterpieces; however, the painting's meaning is continually debated. The various interpretations of *The Persistence of Memory* are necessary to understand as they reveal the creative process that Dalí underwent from 1930 to 1933. During this time, Dalí explored the aesthetics of the "soft and hard" while he began developing his paranoid-critical method in his writings. The "soft and hard" of *The Persistence of Memory* was a step along the way for Dalí towards an understanding of his perspective on reality and how it could be envisioned through paranoiac-criticism. Before Dalí could give form to his unique method, he had to comprehend his viewpoint on the world and test its visualization through different stylistic techniques such as representing the 'soft and hard' in the melting clocks and the Catalan landscape of *The Persistence of Memory*.

Dawn Ades, Gavin Parkinson, Robert Radford and Ralf Schiebler analyze the singular themes of either science, psychoanalysis or the 'soft and hard' in *The Persistence of Memory*. However, to focus on psychoanalysis, science or the aesthetics of the painting in isolation would miss the fact that by 1930, Dalí expressed a constellation of ideas in his writings and artworks. For Dalí, both science and psychoanalysis could provide new means for viewing reality as a dichotomy. Although, from 1930 to 1933, Dalí visually expressed his *own* viewpoint through the relationship of the separate forms of the 'soft and hard,' which can be seen as a representation of the rational and irrational forms that reality can take. This chapter will show how *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) was only a part of Dalí's decade-long artistic pursuit. While Dalí envisioned his 'new' world as a dichotomy in *The Persistence of Memory*, his outlook would change in

1933. For that reason, from 1933 through 1935, Dalí would visualize the concept of his paranoid-critical method in his series of Anthropomorphic Landscapes. By 1935, with a complete understanding of his method; however, Dalí would realize that multiple co-existing images were necessary for his vision of reality through paranoiac-criticism.

The Persistence of Memory marks the second stage of Dalí's creative process, as the painting's iconography and atmosphere stem from his earlier investigation in film and his 1929 collage paintings. The hyperrealism of *The Persistence of Memory* and Dalí's close attention to detail harks back to his fascination with the objectivity of the camera. Even though it was painted completely in oil, the precise technique demonstrates Dalí's continued interest in painting like hand-done photography. Furthermore, the set of a movie could have inspired the background of this piece, as Dalí abandoned the ambiguous space from his 1929 canvases. The painting also shows Dalí's sustained effort to represent the process of transformation that was possible in cinema through the technique of rapid montage. However, unlike the figures from Dalí's 1929 paintings, which were shown as transforming from one object into another, the forms in *The Persistence of Memory* are frozen midst their individual transformations into morbid forms.

Although Dalí retained the filmic vision in *The Persistence of Memory*, Dalí expressed his 'new' world in this painting with his developed understanding of both psychoanalysis and Relativity. By 1930, Dalí found a common ground between Freud's theories of psychoanalysis and Einstein's Theory of Relativity, in that they each reveal a different dimension of experience beyond the reality of daily life. In Dalí's mind, neither of these theories dominated the other; rather they co-existed. For that reason, the 'new'

world that Dalí wanted to visualize with *The Persistence of Memory* was his own artistic perspective on reality as a dichotomy and he looked to the findings of Freud and Einstein as proof for the irrational dimension of the world that he believed in.

Due to the complexity of Dalí's artwork, *The Persistence of Memory* must be considered in its entirety. Ades, Radford and Christiane Weidemann dwell on the individual theme of psychoanalysis in the painting. Llorenç Bonet, Parkinson, and Schiebler analyze the soft watches, the Catalan landscape and the aesthetic of the 'soft and hard' in *The Persistence of Memory*. Each critical interpretation focuses on a specific element of the painting and how it relates to either psychoanalysis or science, but these fragmentary interpretations miss Dalí's quest for totality. No single reading is sufficient, as Dalí brought together aspects of his different areas of interests such as film, psychoanalysis and science to fuse them into a new vision of reality; it is the sum of the parts in *The Persistence of Memory* that is significant.

The Persistence of Memory has become an iconic image in Dalí's painting, particularly the melting watches in the piece, which have been the subject of a lot of critical commentary.⁵⁶ The clocks can be interpreted as an individual reference to relativity or psychoanalysis, though this is only a partial insight into the meaning of the work; the clocks are an important component, but only a part of the painting's attack on reality. A soft watch first appeared in Dalí's 1930 painting *Premature Ossification of a Railroad Station*, but it was the watches in *The Persistence of Memory* that would become famous in the art world. Dalí himself wrote about the soft watches in his 1935 article *The Conquest of the Irrational*. He defined them as "tender, paranoiac-critical,

⁵⁶ For more of the soft watches in Dalí's artwork see Ades, *Dalí: Works by Salvador Dalí*, p179.

extravagant and solitary camembert of time and space.”⁵⁷ Dalí played down a deeper significance by relating the clocks to Camembert cheese, although his inclusion of the terms “paranoiac-critical,” “time,” and “space” showed that for him the watches were more than symbols for a soft cheese.

Gavin Parkinson and Ralf Schiebler explain the ‘softness’ of the clocks as a reference to Einstein’s theory of Relativity. Parkinson claims,

*The Phenomena described by Relativity— such as the constant variations taking place in the forms of physical bodies, on however small a scale— led Dalí to import and amplify the elastic, contorted world of Relativity into his early Surrealist canvases as soft, viscous, attenuated forms, sometimes suggestive of anamorphosis.*⁵⁸

Parkinson argues that the soft forms in *The Persistence of Memory* are Dalí’s representation of the new world discovered by Einstein. Schiebler agrees with Parkinson about the influence of Relativity; however, he does not concur that the painting is a world of figures subjected to the forces that the theory describes. He clarifies,

*The Persistence of Memory is a visualization of the theory of relativity, insofar as the theory makes time and space “soft,” ridding them of their absolute rigidity, stretching and compressing them, moulding and bending them, according to the whim of the individual viewer*⁵⁹

According to Schiebler, it is “time” and “space” that are being morphed by the theory of Relativity in *The Persistence of Memory*. The clocks show that time is not an unchanging constant, which Relativity proved. While the forces that Einstein’s theory describes may symbolically distort the watches, Schiebler makes the case that the figures actually

⁵⁷ Dalí, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, as quoted in Finkelstein, *Salvador Dali’s Art and Writing* p.148.

⁵⁸ Parkinson p.181.

⁵⁹ Ralf Schiebler, *Dalí: The Reality of Dreams* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2011) 76.

embody the theory of Relativity. Instead of viewing the figures as an amplified representation of the way that Relativity can warp the world, as Parkinson does, Schiebler sees the melting clock as the depiction of the constantly changing dimension of time and the other soft figures as the visualization of the stretching of space.

Parkinson and Schiebler come to a partial explanation for the soft watches as related to science in *The Persistence of Memory*, but the symbol of the melting clocks must be understood for its interaction with the other elements in the painting. Llorenç Bonet provides a useful interpretation for the relationship of the figures through the dynamic of the soft and hard, though his explanation for the watches lacks the significance of Relativity that Parkinson and Schiebler advanced. Bonet writes, “It is reasonable to associate the watches in *The Persistence of Memory* with ideas about the passage of time and the relation between actual time and remembered time.”⁶⁰ Bonet views the watches as symbols for how time can be experienced in different ways. Time can move slowly depending on what an individual is doing, but upon remembering, time seems to have moved more quickly than what was experienced. Bonet’s interpretation is plausible, though the varying potential of time in relation to the person experiencing it is based on Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, so the clocks independently have more significance than Bonet gives them.

In addition to viewing the watches as symbols of time’s relativity, Bonet sees the ‘soft and hard’ in *The Persistence of Memory* as a representation of the dichotomy between the rational versus irrational. Bonet writes that, “The soft is the edible and, thus,

⁶⁰ Llorenç Bonet and Christina Montes, *Antoni Gaudí/Salvador Dalí* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003) 147.

what can ripen and, in the end, putrefy. In sum, the organic; life.”⁶¹ His argument is that Dalí’s morbid forms reveal the process of life; whatever lives is in a constant state of change until it eventually perishes. This process of life, or what is soft, is opposed to what is hard in the painting, specifically, the rocks of Cape Creus and the landscape of the Ampurdán plain. The angular feature of the rocks from the coast of Cadaqués is visible at the back of the image, as this sharp landscape replaces the ambiguous backgrounds of Dalí’s 1929 paintings. Dalí’s metamorphic image of the rocks from the coastline will also impact his paranoid-critical method in their ability to visually take on different forms, but they are integrated into this painting for a different purpose. As Bonet points out, the hard rocks in *The Persistence of Memory* create an unsettling contrast with the soft forms at the forefront of the canvas.

Dalí intentionally related the contradictory forms of the soft watches to the angular rocks to show how he saw reality as a dichotomy. In the early 1930s, Dalí’s art and writings would claim that both the rational and the irrational exist simultaneously with no point of resolution. Bonet’s outlook supports the argument that *The Persistence of Memory* was Dalí’s visualization of a ‘new’ world through the relationship of the soft morbid forms and the hard forms inspired by the Catalan coast. According to Bonet, the hard is the irrational, what is impossible to understand, while the soft is the rational as it is the reality experienced every day. As he says of *The Persistence of Memory*: the rocks and the landscape are, “...spectral elements, often disquieting because they appear to conceal something in their apparent simplicity,” while the soft, “...is also unsettling, but

⁶¹ Bonet p.36.

not because of what it conceals; it is disquieting rather for what it reveals.”⁶² For Bonet, Dalí gives form to a new reality in *The Persistence of Memory* through the dichotomy of the rational ever-changing life and the irrational consistency of the hard. Dalí contradicts what is understood as reality, “He shows us briefly the interior: what we know will perish with us; what we don’t know and can never understand will survive.”⁶³ Though the irrational and the rational are co-existing in the single canvas of *The Persistence of Memory*, Dalí represents them as individual symbols, which he will later combine into a cohesive image of reality through the complete visualization of his paranoid-critical method.

One might argue that Parkinson, Schiebler and Bonet’s explanations of the soft forms in *The Persistence of Memory* can be combined to show that Dalí was confronting reality through the symbol of Relativity in the soft watches in contrast to the hard, irrational coastline; however, this interpretation is still incomplete. The aesthetic of the ‘soft and hard’ and the Catalan landscape are also representations of a new dimension of experience, which was claimed by psychoanalysis. Haim Finkelstein, who brings a psychoanalytic lens to Dalí, does not see the soft forms as related to the theory of Relativity as Parkinson and Schiebler do, or as a part of a rational versus irrational dichotomy like Bonet; rather he sees the soft forms as embedded in the theory of psychoanalysis. He declares,

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

*The anamorphic vision as a technique was plainly superfluous for Dalí, whose distended and distorted forms served as aesthetic equivalents for a whole array of psychic or psycho-sexual preoccupations inherent in his 'nutritional' vision and passion for softness.*⁶⁴

Freud's analysis of dreams was based on bringing unconscious thoughts or obsessions to a conscious state so that they could be evaluated. For Finkelstein, the soft figures were an inner obsession of Dalí's that he expressed because of his readings on psychoanalysis. Dalí wrote extensively about his obsessions and fears in his diary *The Secret Life* (1942), so Finkelstein's perspective is not inaccurate. There are definitely references to Dalí's "psychic preoccupations" in the painting; however, it is doubtful that the technique was "plainly superfluous." The ants swarming on the surface of the pocket watch could reference Dalí's childhood experience of discovering a rotting corpse, and the central figure could be a self-portrait of Dalí, as a similar image is in his 1929 painting, *The Great Masturbator*. Psychoanalysis was a great interest of Dalí's in the 1930s, but so was Relativity; both influences exist in the individual elements, which for Dalí together form the reality of the rational versus irrational dichotomy.

Not unlike Finkelstein, Radford interprets *The Persistence of Memory* with an emphasis on psychoanalysis. Radford discusses the background of the Catalan coast as more of a dream world than an actual location. He claims that, "Certainly the bare, hard outline of the cliffs and the crystal clear light of the sky are there, but the empty, desert-like expanses of the painting are much closer to the topography of the mind, to a

⁶⁴ Finkelstein, "Salvador Dalí's Anthropomorphic Landscapes," (*Pantheon* vol. 46 1988): 142-148.

dreamscape.”⁶⁵ It is true that the setting is not a real space, though Dalí’s choice to depict the angular rocks of Cadaques cannot be ignored. The background was important to Dalí as a reference to his childhood, and in turn psychoanalysis, and as influential in the dichotomy of the “soft and hard.” However, Radford makes a critical point in that the setting is definitely more than a landscape. It is not a real space; it could be a dreamscape as Radford suggests *or* a world subjected to the forces of Relativity as Parkinson and Schiebler argue. Like their interpretations, Radford’s reading is legitimate and plausible, but it offers a limited way for viewing the painting.

These varied critical interpretations have shed some light on the meaning of *The Persistence of Memory*, but their insistence that psychoanalysis or Relativity dominates the work misses the point that these theories are equally important for Dalí’s perspective on reality and how it could be envisioned in this painting. With *The Persistence of Memory* Dalí advances that both the rational and irrational exist in life, just as science and psychoanalysis co-exist and are equally present in the world.

By the time that Dalí completed *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), he had joined the Surrealist movement; so it makes sense that he would incorporate metamorphic forms into his canvas like the Surrealist painters Yves Tanguy and André Masson had. The Surrealists and Dalí wanted to discredit reality and initially their means to do so was aligned. As Ades points out, “Surrealism alone has systematically sought the interface between internal and external realities, illusion and vision, perception and thought.”⁶⁶ However, in the early 1930s, Dalí incorporated the aesthetics of the ‘soft and hard’ to visually express his perspective on reality as a dichotomy, an idea that would separate

⁶⁵ Robert Radford, *Dalí* (New York: Phaidon Press Inc, 2004) 146.

⁶⁶ Ades ed. *Dalí’s Optical Illusions*, p.12.

him from the goals of the movement that André Breton laid out in his *Second Surrealist Manifesto* (1929).

With the *Second Manifesto*, Breton encouraged a pursuit of knowledge with tools, including, but not limited to, automatism and the study of dreams. Breton wrote that automatism and the dream were “the best thing we have found” to help “give man some fair idea of his resources,” but he clarified that “these direct means are not the only ones.”⁶⁷ *The Second Manifesto* opened the doors for a new method of understanding the human mind, and initially Breton welcomed Dalí’s creativity to aid in the quest for knowledge.

Although Dalí joined the Surrealist movement in 1929, he would disagree with Breton’s goal to eliminate the irrational contradictions of reality. In the *Second Manifesto* Breton asserted:

*Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, ceased to be perceived as contradictions. Now, search as one may one will never find any other motivating force in the activity of the Surrealists than the hope of finding and fixing this point...*⁶⁸

In contradiction, in his 1930 article “The Rotting Donkey”, Dalí wrote: “I believe that the moment is near when, through a process of thought of a paranoiac and active character, it will be possible to systematize confusion and contribute to the total discrediting of the world of reality.”⁶⁹ Dalí wanted to *permanently* discredit reality; he did not think the world could ever be only rational; both the rational and the irrational exist together.

⁶⁷ Breton, *Second Surrealist Manifesto*, as quoted in Finkelstein, *Dalí’s Art and Writing*, p182.

⁶⁸ André Breton, *Second Surrealist Manifesto*, as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p98.

⁶⁹ Salvador Dalí, ‘The Rotten Donkey,’ as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p121.

Therefore, Dalí envisioned the unsolvable dichotomy of the rational versus irrational in the ‘soft and hard’ forms of *The Persistence of Memory*.

Even though Dalí remained in the Surrealist movement until 1939, by the early 1930s he was clearly on an individual artistic pursuit. In 1934, Dalí’s goal to confront the world was evident when he was summoned by Breton to appear before the Surrealists. While the meeting at Breton’s apartment on 5 February 1934 was focused on Dalí’s political views, Breton must have felt threatened by Dalí’s writings and individual style. Dalí defended himself against Breton’s accusations of his art by stating, “dream remained the great vocabulary of Surrealism and delirium the most magnificent means of poetic expression.”⁷⁰ Before going on his own as an artist, Dalí needed a unique way of expressing his ideas; he had to fully develop the paranoid-critical method. From the late 1920s through the 1930s, Dalí worked through his method in his writings *and* attempted to capture it on canvas.

Between 1933 and 1935, Dalí created his short series of Anthropomorphic Landscapes to expand the ‘soft and hard’ from *The Persistence of Memory*, and explore the concepts behind paranoiac-criticism. As visible in *The Specter of Sex Appeal* (1934), the anthropomorphic style consisted of an illusionistic manipulation of landscape elements and figures set against the background of beaches. *The Specter of Sex Appeal* is similar to *The Persistence of Memory* with its Catalan setting and its confrontation with reality; however, Dalí created *The Specter of Sex Appeal* with his paranoid-critical method in mind. Beyond representing a new world, which was the goal of *The Persistence of Memory*, *The Specter of Sex Appeal* relies on the viewer to unify the

⁷⁰ Dalí, *The Secret Life*, as quoted in Ades *Dalí: Works by Salvador Dalí* p.107.

objects into the central figure. The Anthropomorphic Landscapes combine the aesthetics from *The Persistence of Memory* with the new significance of the viewer as part of Dalí's artistic investigation of his paranoid-critical method. There are few of these landscapes because they are an artistic experiment; they hint at Dalí's method, but do not fully accomplish his goals. Finkelstein writes, "That the paintings in this series are so few in number is a telling testimony to the frustration of Dalí's efforts to make a more extensive use of this conception."⁷¹ By "this conception," Finkelstein is referring to the process of interpreting small objects so that they come together to visualize a different form. The transformation of the morbid forms in *The Persistence of Memory* and the transformation from several small images to one large one in the Anthropomorphic Landscapes will be replaced with co-existing images in Dalí's finalization of his paranoid-critical method.

Dalí's 1933 painting *The Phantom Cart* is an example of the paranoid-critical method done effectively, though not exclusively. The figures in the cart are seen as separate from the landscape in one possible interpretation and then as a part of the town's architecture in another. Though Dalí turned to anthropomorphic landscapes after painting *The Phantom Cart*, he quickly realized that the method of interpreting these landscapes was not what he wanted for paranoia-criticism. A true paranoiac-critical interpretation requires a complete image that can be interpreted as another complete image, not several smaller figures that come together to form a new one. *The Phantom Cart* allows for the paranoiac-critical method of interpretation, but the co-existing images make up only a small part of the canvas. The rest of the painting is devoted to a landscape, a scene, which might have been inspired by Dalí's childhood experience of travelling by cart

⁷¹ Finkelstein, "Salvador Dalí's Anthropomorphic Landscapes," p.144.

every summer with his family to their house on the coast of Cadaques. For that reason, *The Phantom Cart* marks Dalí's better, yet still incomplete understanding of his method. In 1938, with a comprehension of paranoiac-criticism, Dalí would return to painting multiple images and envision the multiple dimensions of his 'new' world.

The Pursuit of an Irrational Reality in The Endless Enigma (1938)

On 1 July 1936, an audience gathered in London to hear Dalí's lecture "Authentic Paranoiac-phantoms." Dalí was slowly led into the room, in a full diving suit, by two white Russian wolfhounds.

Lord Berners was in charge of renting the diving suit in question, and over the telephone they asked him to specify exactly to what depth Mr. Dalí wished to descend. Lord Berners replied that [Dalí] was going to descend to the subconscious, after which [he] would immediately come up again. With equal seriousness the voice answered that in this case they would replace the helmet with a special one⁷²

Due to the "special" helmet, Dalí was unable to "descend to the subconscious" as he had hoped. Dalí began to suffocate underneath the airtight helmet, so Gala and Edward James used a billiard cue to try and create a split between the helmet and the suit. As this was unsuccessful, they brought a hammer to strike the bolts that were holding the helmet in place. "The audience for the most part was convinced that all this was part of the show, and was loudly applauding, extremely amused at the pantomime that [they] were playing so realistically."⁷³ While what Dalí was going to say is unknown, he wrote of the effects of this event on the public's perception of him,

I believe that the Dalinian mythology which was already so crystallized upon my return to New York owed a great deal to the violent eccentricity of this lecture in a diving suit, as well as to the distinction of the exhibit of my paintings which Mr. MacDonald had held in his London Gallery...⁷⁴

By 1936, Dalí had developed a reputation around the world as a character full of entertaining surprises, though his artwork and writings from that time reveal the

⁷² Dalí, *The Secret Life*, 344-345.

⁷³ Dalí, *The Secret Life*, 345.

⁷⁴ Dalí, *The Secret Life*, 345.

intellectual dimension behind the flamboyant persona that he presented to the public. The title of the lecture, “Authentic Paranoiac-phantoms” and Dalí’s choice to wear a diving suit because he wanted to “descend to the subconscious” demonstrate that this talk was more significant for Dalí than the fame that it brought him. His lecture coincided with the exhibition of his artworks in London’s *International Surrealist Exhibition* (1936), which took place the same year that Dalí appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine for the Museum of Modern Art’s *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* exhibition in New York.⁷⁵

Even though Dalí’s recognition as an important artist in the Surrealist movement was growing internationally throughout the 1930s, he had not yet managed to visualize his unique perspective on reality; he definitely wanted to be famous, but he also wanted his paranoid-critical method to be understood and respected. A year before the “Authentic Paranoiac-phantoms” lecture, Dalí wrote *The Conquest of the Irrational* (1935), his most complete elaboration of the paranoid-critical method in words, but after working out paranoiac-criticism in his writing, Dalí wanted to capture his method on canvas.

This chapter will analyze Dalí’s creative process from the early 1930s until 1938, when he perfected the concept behind and the expression of the paranoid-critical method with his painting *The Endless Enigma*. Ades, Parkinson and Finkelstein have analyzed Dalí’s paranoiac-criticism with distinct opinions on how Dalí developed and expressed his method, linking it with either psychoanalysis or science. While these scholars add a significant interpretation, they underestimate the inter-connectedness of Dalí’s artistic

⁷⁵ For a more extensive chronology of Dalí’s exhibitions see Radford, *Dalí*, 339-342.

pursuit and how it resulted in *The Endless Enigma*. This chapter will illuminate the steps Dalí took to arrive at this culminating artistic statement.

As early as 1929, Dalí knew that his artistic goal was to depict a new world. He had read about Freud's discoveries in the field of psychoanalysis and Einstein's Theory of Relativity while he was a student in Madrid, and he looked to their writings as proof for the existence of a new dimension of experience. From the late 1920s through the 1930s, Dalí experimented with cinema, collage, and the visual motifs of double images and the 'soft and hard'. At the same time, he expanded his own method for viewing and visualizing the 'new' world in his writing, including his 1930 article "The Rotting Donkey."

For Dalí, *Un Chien andalou* (1929), *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) and The Anthropomorphic Landscapes were necessary *explorations* into capturing a new reality, but through a decade of an artistic and verbal pursuit Dalí would envision his 'new' world through multiple images and paranoiac-criticism. Before Dalí could develop his unique method of interpretation in 1935, however, he needed to understand the phenomena of paranoia and experiment with its representation. He made a few attempts at a double image in the early 1930s as a part of his investigation into his own paranoia, but in 1938 he would return to multiple images, as by then he understood his method and how it could be used to visualize his perspective on reality.

Developing paranoiac-criticism took over a decade for Dalí; he was first interested in confronting reality in 1929, and he thought the means for doing so was through film. In the late 1920s through the early 1930s, Dalí carried over the aspects of cinema that appealed to him into his canvases—the objectivity of the camera and the

technique of a rapid montage—by painting with extreme technical exactness and representing the process of transformation. He experimented with collage in paintings like *Illumined Pleasures* (1929); however, by 1931, Dalí believed that the stagnant medium of painting only in oil was necessary for his visualization of an alternate reality.⁷⁶ For that reason, Dalí explored the theme of the ‘soft and hard’ in some of his 1931 works, including the iconic painting *The Persistence of Memory* (1931). Despite the success of this painting in aiding Dalí’s career and visualizing a new world, it was still only a step along the way for Dalí.

While creating significant artworks in the early 1930s, Dalí was also researching and writing about further developments in the fields of science and psychoanalysis in his effort to further question the reality that he understood at the time. Even in Dalí’s 1930 lecture, “Moral Position of Surrealism,” Dalí’s goals were clear and he was beginning to understand how to achieve them. He discussed the “ruining and discrediting of the world as perceived by the senses and the intellect” through the use of a “violently paranoiac will to systematize confusion.”⁷⁷ By 1929, Dalí knew he wanted to discredit reality and he was starting to realize how the concept of paranoia could aid in his confrontation by 1930.

In 1930 Dalí also wrote “The Rotting Donkey” and worked on his first series of double images as an exploration into the phenomena of paranoia and how to represent it on canvas. Paranoia was an appealing concept to Dalí, because it, not unlike Einstein’s Theory of Relativity and Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis, could serve as proof for a

⁷⁶ For more on the relationship between Cinema and Paintings in Dalí’s art see Gale, ed., *Dalí & Film*, 16-52.

⁷⁷ Dalí lecture, “Moral Position of Surrealism,” as quoted in Finkelstein, *Dalí’s Art and Writing*, p181.

new dimension of experience. The classical conception of paranoia was, as Finkelstein explains:

Based on the assumption that there is indeed a 'paranoiac constitution' – an innate tendency for certain kinds of errors of judgment and false conclusions- and that the paranoiac interpretation is an attempt to justify the originally erroneous conclusions in a reasoning manner.⁷⁸

By 1930, Dalí already saw paranoia in a different way than Finkelstein's definition of the classical conception of paranoia. Finkelstein's explanation reveals that paranoia was perceived as a slow system of correcting the errors of the mind; paranoia was a medical problem in need of a cure. Dalí, on the other hand, did not think paranoia was a medical problem or something that should be cured. He defined paranoia as "reasoning madness" and famously stated that, "The only difference between myself and a madman is that I am not mad."⁷⁹ What Dalí meant and clarified in "The Rotting Donkey" is that paranoiacs *choose* to misread the world because of an over-riding obsessive idea; they are not victims of their own madness.

While Dalí's viewpoint on the paranoiac process would evolve, "The Rotting Donkey" reveals such key concepts as the power and root of paranoia that will impact Dalí's method and visualization of a new reality. Dalí wrote that, "The new simulacra that paranoid thought may suddenly release will not only originate in the unconscious,

⁷⁸ Finkelstein, *Dalí's Art and Writing*, p. 187.

⁷⁹ Dalí defined paranoia as 'reasoning madness' in his article, "The Rotting Donkey," as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.122, Dalí stated "The only difference between myself and a madman is that I am not mad" at the opening of his 1934 exhibition in Paris, as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.119.

but the force of the paranoid power shall also be placed at the service of the latter.”⁸⁰ In other words, the paranoid thought begins in the unconscious and can also be controlled by the unconscious. Dalí’s belief that paranoiacs could manipulate their unconscious to view the world in a different way than non-paranoids was an important factor for the ‘active’ interpretation his method would advance and what sets it apart from automatism and the study of dreams.

With the “The Rotting Donkey,” Dalí distinguished paranoia from hallucination; he saw the former as an *active* mental state controlled by the *unconscious* and the latter as a voluntary *loss* of *conscious* control. Dalí asserted:

*The very fact of paranoia, especially when its mechanism is considered as a force and power, leads us to the possibility of a mental crisis of an order which is perhaps equivalent to, but in any case, poles apart from, that crisis to which the phenomenon of hallucination equally subjects us.*⁸¹

While paranoia involves a similar type of ‘mental crisis’ as does hallucination, Dalí argued that paranoia was a controllable crisis depending on an individual’s paranoiac capacity. In other words, it is not a loss of control; it is a controlled form of madness. Jeremy Stubbs explains the distinction between hallucination and Dalí’s concept of paranoia by writing, “One might say that the hallucinator is the passive victim of their hallucinations while the interpreter is the active author of their delirium.”⁸² Individuals who suffer from hallucinations hear and see things that others do not, because what they

⁸⁰ Dalí, “The Rotting Donkey,” found in Robert Descharnes, ed, *OUI: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution Writings 1927-1933 by Salvador Dalí*, Translated by Yvonne Shafir (Boston, Mass: Exact Change Books, 1998) p115.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Hank Hine ed., William Jeffett, and Kelly Reynolds, eds., *Persistence and Memory: New Critical Perspectives on Dalí at the Centennial* (St. Petersburg, Florida: The Salvador Dalí Museum exh. cat., 2004) 18.

are experiencing is not actually real. On the other hand, a paranoid sees material *in reality* and *interprets* it differently from other people.

In distinguishing between paranoia and hallucination in 1930, Dalí discovered the possibility of using the inner phenomena of paranoia to contradict the external reality of perception. For Dalí, paranoia marked the boundary between the external and the internal reality; it is a thought process that stems from an outside source. Once something is seen in the external world, the mind can hold onto the image and make it an obsession even if the source is no longer present. Dalí explained:

*Paranoia uses the external world as a means to assert the obsessive idea, with its disturbing characteristic of making this idea's reality valid to others. The reality of the external world serves as illustration and proof, and is placed in the service of the reality of our mind.*⁸³

Dalí would continue to develop his understanding of the relationship between paranoia and the external world over the next few years, but in 1930 it was the idea that paranoia could turn a personal or 'obsessive' idea into a universal reality that influenced his artwork.

In 1930, Dalí explored the phenomena of paranoia by representing his inner obsessions through repetitive symbols; he worked to create an artistic vocabulary based on his own experiences. Dalí gave form to his obsessive state of mind in the painting *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion* (1930) as an attempt to turn *his* personal ideas into a *universal* reality. The three images in the painting are rooted in Dalí's own obsessions; in the complete figure, which combines human and animal elements, Dalí projects his unconscious reality onto the world. Instead of creating an artwork through a

⁸³ Dalí, "The Rotting Donkey," Found in Descharnes, ed, *OUI: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution*, p115.

paranoiac process or making a painting that relies on a paranoiac interpretation, in *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion* Dalí shows how his own paranoid mind works. Finkelstein argues that, Dalí's "elaboration of the theory, beginning with "The Rotting Donkey" is marked by an ongoing effort to project his own obsessions and scatological preoccupations on the world at large and thus endow them with a measure of universality."⁸⁴ Finkelstein's viewpoint on paranoiac-criticism supports the idea that Dalí wanted to visualize his inner paranoia in *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion*.

Although Dalí was successful in representing his own paranoia in *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion*, he was only exploring the potential of a double image not discrediting the world of reality. With *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion*, Dalí did create a double image in that one object is also another, but he did so through distortions. Dalí morphed the woman's figure to accommodate the form of a horse and the head of a lion. Consequently, the viewer's eyes shift across the canvas to see the different figures that transform into one another, a process that stems from Dalí's exploration with cinema. The idea of transformation was Dalí's initial tool to question reality; he discovered it by working in film and transferred it to his canvases of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Dalí made one thing become another when he used a rapid montage in *Un Chien andalou* (1929), in which an object could be seen in one scene, but revealed as something different in the next scene.

In 1930, Dalí used his own paranoia to explore the possibilities of a double image, but his perspective on reality would change and he would stop representing the process of transformation. He would come to think that although reality *can* transform objects, the

⁸⁴ Hank Hine ed., *Persistence and Memory: New Critical Perspectives on Dalí*, p61.

world is actually a totality with multiple ideas that exist with equal significance at the same time. In viewing reality as a paradox, Dalí would ultimately visualize his perspective through multiple images that are individual and complete. In his 1930 article, “The Rotting Donkey,” Dalí would define the double image as,

*The representation of an object which, without the slightest figurative or anatomical modification, is at the same time the representation of another absolutely different object, itself also devoid of any kind of deformation or abnormality betraying some arrangement*⁸⁵

Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion was a double image that relied on distortions and the process of transformation so it did not fulfill Dalí’s definition of the coexistent equality of the double image. Therefore, this painting was important for Dalí’s exploration into his own paranoia, but in 1938, Dalí would use multiple images to visualize his perspective on reality as a paradox.

Dalí made few attempts at a double image in 1930 beyond *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion* and instead turned to the theme of the ‘soft and hard.’ However, Dalí continued his investigation into paranoia and found support for his reading of the phenomena in the writings of Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). Lacan was writing his doctoral thesis “on Paranoiac Psychosis in its Relations with the Personality” (1932) at the same time that Dalí published his article “The Rotting Donkey.” Lacan emphasized the active nature of paranoia in psychological terms, which Dalí welcomed as a conformation of his own idea. Dalí wrote,

Lacan’s work perfectly gives an account of the objective and ‘communicable’ hyperacuity of the phenomenon, thanks to which the delirium takes on this tangible character, which is impossible to

⁸⁵ Dalí, “The Rotting Donkey,” (1930) found in Descharnes, ed, *OUI: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution*, p116.

*contradict, and which places it at the very antipodes of the stereotypes of automatism and the dream*⁸⁶

Lacan's thesis encouraged Dalí's new understanding of the paranoid process and would aid in Dalí's development of the paranoid-critical method. Lacan described paranoid psychosis as the "coherent structure of an immediate and noumenal apprehension of oneself and the world."⁸⁷ Dalí already thought that a paranoid misreads the world because of an over-riding obsessive idea, which is what influenced his first double images, but the coherence and immediacy of the process that Lacan advanced, added a new dimension to Dalí's perspective on paranoia.

Lacan's idea that paranoia was a complete delusional system at the core of the human psyche, one that could unveil the manifestations that already exist in 'reality,' contradicted prior psychoanalytic theory, which saw paranoia as a slow process of re-evaluating a delusion. After reading Lacan's thesis, Dalí saw the mechanism of paranoia as a "force and power acting at the base of the phenomenon of personality."⁸⁸ As Finkelstein notes, Dalí looked to Lacan's thesis to account for the "homogenous," "total," and "sudden" character of paranoia.⁸⁹ Therefore, Dalí had to abandon his earlier interest in depicting the process of transformation, as the new 'reality' of paranoia required images that were not only the representation of one object and then another, but a

⁸⁶ Dalí, "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," (1933) as quoted in Ades, *Dalí*, p.124.

⁸⁷ Jacques Lacan, "Le Problème du style et la conception psychiatrique des formes paranoïaque de l'expérience," (1933) as quoted in Ades, ed., *Dalí's Optical Illusions*, p.78.

⁸⁸ Dalí, "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," as quoted in Finkelstein, *Dalí's Art and Writing*, p.187.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

complete image that exists in reality and can be manipulated into another *complete* image through a paranoiac process.

By 1933 and after reading Lacan's thesis, Dalí could formulate a method for viewing the complex dimensions of reality. Instead of trying to use the mind to *rationalize* the *irrationalities* of the world as Breton had hoped to achieve through automatism and the dream, Dalí set out to view the world irrationally. In 1933, Dalí wrote his article "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," which was his first use of the complete term 'paranoiac-critical.'⁹⁰ In discussing this article, Ades writes that, "Dalí was clearly making a bid for the greater value and importance of paranoia-criticism."⁹¹ Dalí described a movement in Surrealism from "general irrationality" which was associated with the dream and automatism, to the "concrete irrationality" of paranoiac-criticism.⁹² In the early 1930s, Dalí was beginning to believe that automatism and the dream were stuck in a symbolic state in their confrontation with reality. In his 1933 article, Dalí asserted that, "The dream and automatism would only make sense as preserved idealist evasions, an inoffensive and recreational resource for the comfortable care of the skeptical gaiety of poets."⁹³ For Dalí, paranoiac-criticism could free these ideas and provide a new dimension of experience through an active method of interpretation. Although by 1933 Dalí had a

⁹⁰ Dalí's article "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," was originally published in the United States and translated to English in: Robert Descharnes ed., *OUI 2: Scientific Archangelism, Dalí's Writings 1933-1978*, Translated by Yvonne Shafir (Boston Mass: Exact Change Books, 2002).

⁹¹ Ades, *Dalí*, p.122.

⁹² Dalí, "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," (1933) as quoted in Finkelstein p186.

⁹³ Salvador Dalí, "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus," as quoted in Ades, *Dalí* p.124.

name for his method and confidence in his goal to contradict reality, his article “Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet’s Angelus,” was only his first step in understanding how paranoia could be a lens for viewing reality irrationally.

From 1933 to 1935, Dalí made his series of Anthropomorphic Landscapes as an effort to incorporate paranoiac-criticism into his canvases. While these landscapes require the paranoiac-interpretation of the viewer to piece together the images—a significant step from Dalí’s *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion*—they are formed by smaller objects that come together into a larger one. The Anthropomorphic Landscapes are successful representations of how the viewer can use the paranoid-critical method as a lens, but they do not achieve the totality or homogeneity that paranoia and Dalí’s perspective on reality required. In order for them to be paranoid-critical images, the Anthropomorphic Landscapes would have needed to be formed by complete and individual images, not smaller ones that make a whole. Moreover, the fact that Dalí made so few Anthropomorphic Landscapes supports the idea that they were only an exploration into the method of interpretation that Dalí was beginning to advance.

For Dalí, developing the paranoiac-critical method was a creative process that he worked through in both his writing and his artwork as a part of his artistic goal to visualize his ‘new’ world. From 1929 through the early 1930s, Dalí researched, wrote and painted to further his viewpoint on reality. His perspective on the world changed from knowing reality is not as it seems, to believing it is a dichotomy and ultimately to viewing reality as an irrational paradox. Dalí’s art paralleled his changes in thought; in a decade, he went from film to the ‘soft and hard’ and to multiple images. Therefore,

Dalí's art and writing from 1929 through 1938 can be separated into three distinct stages. After *Un Chien andalou* (1929) and *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), Dalí focused on elaborating his method, as the third and final part of his artistic pursuit to visualize his perspective on reality.

The inter-connectedness of Dalí's decade-long process is a significant and often overlooked aspect of his career. However, Finkelstein's article "Three Arenas of Paranoiac-criticism," also separates Dalí's development from the late 1920s to the late 1930s into three connected stages. Finkelstein realizes that Dalí's creation and use of the paranoid-critical method was a verbal and visual pursuit, but he undervalues Dalí's ultimate goal of visualizing a new world. Finkelstein sees Dalí's second stage (from 1929-1932) as the most successful use of the theories of paranoiac-criticism, and the final stage (late 1930s) as a regression. Finkelstein writes that the second stage "subsumes what [he] consider[s] to be a basic dichotomy informing [Dalí's] theory of paranoiac-criticism. [Dalí's second stage] also serves as a locus for [his] visual demonstration of his paranoiac-critical insights."⁹⁴ Finkelstein clarifies what makes up the dichotomy in Dalí's second stage: "on the one hand, the largely deceptive adoption of Renaissance perspective, and, on the other, its subversion by means of the anamorphic vision of perspectival distortion."⁹⁵ For Finkelstein, Dalí's manipulation of perspective and use of the anamorphic vision in the early 1930s reflects "the coexistence of the universal and personal in Dalí's paranoiac-critical activity."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Hank Hine ed., *Persistence and Memory: New Critical Perspectives on Dalí*, p.59.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p62.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

While “Three Arenas of Paranoiac-criticism” suggests the superiority of Dalí’s second stage, Finkelstein’s explanation for the individual stages can actually support the perspective that Dalí’s use of the paranoid-critical method in the late 1930s was the most successful for his goal of visualizing reality. Finkelstein’s emphasis on a dichotomy in the second stage of Dalí’s art is aligned with the argument that, in the early 1930s, Dalí believed reality was an irrational versus rational dichotomy. However in 1933, Dalí’s view changed so he experimented with the representation of paranoiac-criticism on canvas and by 1938 he would use his method as a *tool* for visualizing his ‘new’ world. Finkelstein, on the other hand, writes that Dalí’s third stage, “marks a reversal of the fundamental concepts underlying paranoia-criticism until that time.”⁹⁷ Finkelstein emphasizes the theories behind Dalí’s method, not how he used it to discredit reality.

In the late 1930s, Dalí went beyond representing the idea of paranoiac-criticism to using his method as a means to confront reality. Finkelstein explains the change from Dalí’s second to third stage by claiming that:

*“It constituted a shift from a conception based on the uncertainty of the paranoiac vision, in which the fragments of reality nucleate in a variety of patterns and constructions on Dalí’s small stage of paranoiac ceremonial, to the assertion of an absolute vision of reality.”*⁹⁸

Finkelstein’s opinion is valid as Dalí’s artworks from the early 1930s *do* represent the *conception* of the paranoid-critical method. However, after experimenting with the concepts of his method, Dalí would *envision* his ‘new’ world through the lens of paranoiac-criticism.

⁹⁷ Ibid.p59.

⁹⁸ Ibid.p59

Furthermore, only in 1935, when Dalí wrote *The Conquest of the Irrational* did he fully understand and elaborate his method in writing. In that text, Dalí made the essential clarification between paranoia and paranoiac-critical activity. He defined paranoia as a “delirium of interpretative association involving a systematic structure” and paranoiac-critical activity as a “spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretative-critical association of delirium phenomena.”⁹⁹ With this distinction, Dalí discovered the potential for his method to achieve not only the representation of the phenomena of paranoia, but the visualization of a new world through the lens of paranoiac-critical activity.

In 1933, Dalí saw reality as an unsolvable paradox and by 1935 he could stop searching for the logical explanation that Breton had encouraged with the *Second Manifesto*. Marc LaFountain similarly asserts that Dalí’s “Conquest is not *of* the irrational, but *by* the irrational.”¹⁰⁰ Instead of trying to *rationalize* the *irrational*, Dalí would employ an *irrational* method to view the world *rationally*. LaFountain describes Dalí’s transformation of thought in 1935:

*No longer was Dalí concerned with the dialectical relationship of the conscious and the unconscious... His attention turned away from a celebration of hiding and appearing, of revealing and concealing, toward the evasive motility of the unthought and the incommunicable*¹⁰¹

Dalí’s paranoiac-criticism was not meant to be a tool for comprehending the irrational; it was a way of using the paranoiac faculty to see the world as an irrational paradox.

⁹⁹ Dalí, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, as quoted in Finkelstein, *Dalí’s Art and Writing*, p.187.

¹⁰⁰ Marc J. LaFountain, *Dali and Postmodernism: This Is Not an Essence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 63.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.74.

With *The Conquest of the Irrational*, Dalí insisted that paranoiac images, like reality, defy interpretation and instead appear as complete manifestations of the world. In 1935, Dalí wrote that images of “concrete irrationality” are “authentically unknown images,” which are “unexplainable and irreducible either by systems of logical intuition or by rational mechanisms.”¹⁰² Dalí saw paranoiac images as opposed to automatism, which he thought produced paintings that could be psychoanalyzed and “easily reduced to ordinary and logical language.”¹⁰³ For Dalí, the new images of ‘concrete irrationality,’ “tend toward their real and physical ‘possibility.’”¹⁰⁴ Paranoiac-criticism goes beyond the rational interpretations of psychoanalysis, allowing for the images to “approach the phenomenal Real.”¹⁰⁵ Dalí connected his method with reality, as he viewed both as irrational. The viewer is not meant to use the paranoid-critical method to make sense of an image, but to see it irrationally. As Ades writes, “It is clear that Dalí’s chief claim for his method is that it will enable him to make concrete irrational images, cultivating confusion rather than contributing to the breakdown of the antimony between mad and sane.”¹⁰⁶ Ades’ perspective supports the argument that Dalí’s method was intended to simulate the madness of reality.

While *The Conquest of the Irrational* marked Dalí’s written articulation and comprehension of paranoiac-criticism, it was, as Finkelstein notes in his article “Salvador Dalí’s Anthropomorphic Landscapes,” Dalí’s reworking of the postcard that he had received from Picasso in 1931 that influenced his visualization of his method through

¹⁰² Dalí, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, as quoted in Finkelstein, *Dalí’s Art and Writing*, p186.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ades, *Dalí*, p.128.

multiple co-existing images. In December 1931, for a “Communication” published in the third issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*, Dalí reproduced a postcard photograph of a group of Africans sitting in front of a straw hut.¹⁰⁷ Along with the frontal view of the postcard, Dalí showed the photograph on its side to demonstrate how viewing the image from a different angle could transform it into a face. Dalí and Breton had discovered different readings of the image that were rooted in their individual preoccupations at the time. Finkelstein discusses Dalí’s and Breton’s experience of viewing the postcard: “[With Dalí’s and Breton’s unique interpretations of the photograph] the delirious idea is already in existence for both Dalí and Breton, because their respective preoccupations with Picasso and Sade precede the delirium itself.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, Dalí’s and Breton’s distinct inner-obsessions shaped their paranoiac-critical interpretation of the image.

In 1930; however, Dalí was not yet aware of the implications that his and Breton’s perspectives of the postcard would have for the visualization of his method. In his article “L’Amour,” (1930) Dalí asserted that, “a postcard that I have might Illustrate and even clarify an idea which has begun to obsess me...”¹⁰⁹ Since Dalí wrote this article in 1930, it is arguable that he was beginning to ‘obsess’ over paranoiac-criticism and saw a solution for how to envision his method through the postcard, but he was not certain of how to transfer multiple images to a canvas without representing the process of transformation.

¹⁰⁷ For more information on the article that Dalí published with the photograph of the postcard see Finkelstein, “Salvador Dalí’s Anthropomorphic Landscapes,” (*Pantheon* vol. 46, 1988): 143-144.

¹⁰⁸ Finkelstein, *Dalí’s art and writing*, p189.

¹⁰⁹ Dalí, “L’Amour,” (1930) an article included in “Le Femme Visible,” as quoted in Finkelstein, “Salvador Dalí’s Anthropomorphic Landscapes,” p143.

By 1935, however, Dalí discovered how the multiple perspectives within the postcard could be used to ‘illustrate’ and ‘clarify’ his paranoid-critical method in a painting. For that reason, he reworked the postcard and created *Paranoiac Visage Transformed* (1935). In this painting, the figure can be read as something in one moment and then as a completely different figure in another *without* turning the image on its side. *Paranoiac Visage Transformed* is not composed of several smaller objects that come together into a larger figure, as in Dalí’s Anthropomorphic Landscapes or frozen midst transformation as in the morphing forms of *The Persistence of Memory*. As Finkelstein writes,

*Reworking the postcard image must have reawakened in Dalí an awareness of his technique’s potential for the formation of ‘paranoiac’ images. It might have raised hopes that in a process similar to the one that had led to the discovery of the face in the postcard—a truly paranoiac process of image making—he would be able to juggle with human figures on his canvas—or rather in his mind—discovering thereby other images and arrangements.*¹¹⁰

In other words, by reworking the postcard, Dalí realized that the simultaneity of the images and the role of the viewer were essential for his paranoid-critical method, although it would take him three more years to demonstrate on canvas the complete switch between consistent and independent alternative readings of an image.

Before Dalí could create his series of multiple images in 1938, he was confronted with the Civil War and fascism; a reality that would both influence and distract him from his artistic pursuit. While Dalí maintained his focus on the paranoid-critical method, evidenced by the title of his 1936 lecture “Authentic Paranoiac-phantoms,” his artworks from 1936 through the end of the war were reflections on the reality of war, not

¹¹⁰ Finkelstein, “Salvador Dalí’s Anthropomorphic Landscapes,” p144.

visualizations of a new world through the lens of paranoiac-criticism. Even though Dalí was apolitical, he made paintings like *The Enigma of Hitler* (1936) as a part of his fascination with Hitler's paranoia. The Surrealists criticized Dalí for his refusal to condemn Hitler; however, Dalí saw no point in trying to rationalize Hitler's actions. The destruction of fascism served as proof for his perspective on the irrationality of reality.

Dalí wrote in *The Secret Life* (1942):

The Spanish Civil war changed none of my ideas. On the contrary it endowed their evolution with a decisive rigor...Nor did I want to be called a reactionary. This I was not: I did not "react"—which is an attribute of unthinking matter. For I simply continued to think, and I did not want to be called anything but Dalí. But already the hyena of public opinion was slinking around me, demanding of me with the drooling menace of its expectant teeth that I make up my mind at last, that I become Stalinist of Hitlerite. No! No! and a thousand times no! I was going to continue to be as always and until I died, Dalinian and only Dalinian! I believed neither in the communist revolution nor in the national-socialist revolution, nor in any other kind of revolution. I believed only in the supreme reality of tradition.¹¹¹

Even though Dalí found support in the war for his viewpoint, he had been forced to leave his home and inspiration in Spain. Dalí travelled around Europe and to the US during the Civil War giving lectures and participating in exhibitions until he could return to his home in 1938. While he enjoyed the excitement and fame he received, he wanted to return to Spain to finish the artistic pursuit he began in 1929. Dalí expressed his wish to return to Port Lligat in *The Secret Life*:

¹¹¹ Dalí, *The Secret Life*, p360.

I suddenly felt myself in the grip of a depression which I was unable to define. I wanted to return to Spain as soon as possible! ... I had had enough of all this! Enough diving suits, lobster-telephones, jewel-clips, soft pianos, archbishops, and blazing pines thrown from windows, enough of publicity and cocktail parties. I wanted to return to Port Lligat as soon as possible... At last, I said to Gala, I would be able to begin to do "important" things.¹¹²

Dalí did not complete his series of multiple images until he returned to Cadaqués in 1938. Dalí wrote of the influence of the Catalan landscape on his multiple images in his diary *The Secret Life*:

Indeed if there is anything to which one must compare these rocks, from the point of view of form, it is clouds, a mass of catastrophic petrified cumuli in ruins. All the images capable of being suggested by the complexity of their innumerable irregularities appear successively and by turn as you change your position.¹¹³

In 1938, upon his return to Spain, Dalí created an important series of artworks including *Apparition of Face and a Fruit Dish on a Beach* (1938), *Beach with Telephone* (1938) and *Spain* (1938). Even though each one of these paintings is a successful multiple image, *The Endless Enigma* (1938) is the most elaborate and technically perfect of the entire series. This painting is Dalí's under-appreciated masterpiece; it accomplishes the goal of picturing the multiple aspects of reality that he set out to achieve a decade earlier.

The Endless Enigma was exhibited at Julien Levy's gallery in New York in 1939, with a catalogue, which identified the six different images and six different possible readings of the piece. The six images are: The beach at Cape Creus with a woman

¹¹² Ibid. 345-346.

¹¹³ Ibid p.304.

seated, mending a sail and seen from the back along with a boat; a reclining philosopher; the face of the great one-eyed moron; a greyhound; a still life consisting of a mandolin a fruit dish with pears and two figs on a table; and all together a mythological beast.

Unlike Dalí's first attempts at a double image in the early 1930s, each image in this painting is individual and complete. Dalí did not capture the figures in a process of transformation, as in *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion* (1930); instead, he created a completely static painting with simultaneous co-existing images.

The Endless Enigma reveals Dalí's technical mastery, as every detail is so precise that none of the six images contradict one another or dominate the painting. Every one of the fully realized images exists at the same time and in the single space of a canvas, but it is impossible to see the individual and separate readings at once. With the aid of the catalogue's diagram, viewers can attempt to analyze a single image, but the six dimensions of the piece are equally powerful and demanding of attention. At one instant an image can recede and become a totally different form and at the next moment another image can advance, forcing the viewer to find a connection between these seemingly unrelated scenes. As LaFountain asserts, *The Endless Enigma* "...is the space where both everything and nothing is connected."¹¹⁴ While it is a challenging artwork, its images are completely linked, which demonstrates that Dalí's every brushstroke was intentional and meticulous.

Despite Dalí's achievement, *The Endless Enigma* has not been given the credit that it deserves. LaFountain is the only scholar to write a book, *Post Modernism: This is Not an Essence*, dedicated to *The Endless Enigma*. In this book, LaFountain points out

¹¹⁴ LaFountain, *Post Modernism: This is Not an Essence*, p.70.

significant reasons for why *The Endless Enigma* has not been fully appreciated: the painting is often misunderstood, seen as a joke, or viewed as evidence for Dalí's failure to properly visualize his method.¹¹⁵ While Gavin Parkinson does not focus on *The Endless Enigma*, he sees the significance of Dalí's multiple imagery as it relates to the fourth dimension in Einstein's Theory of Relativity. He writes:

*With paranoia-criticism's multiple imagery, Dalí could focus illusionistically on a point seized by the three spatial co-ordinates, through which events flood, creating a pictorial analogy of Relativity's four-dimensional architecture of space and time. In this way, he blended past and future events in a single place (frequently the beach) to memorialize sites of nostalgia and speculation.*¹¹⁶

Parkinson's interpretation of Dalí's imagery as a melding of past and future is one of the many possible ways of viewing Dalí's multiple images. LaFountain, on the other hand, specifically compares *The Endless Enigma* to Einstein's Theory of Relativity when he discusses the instant of 'trompe l'oeil,':

*If [the] moment becomes so immediate as to obliterate the collaboration of space and time, then, for all intents and purposes, objects and motions are fixed, caught in a freeze-frame, as were the passengers and trains in Einstein's example of passing trains where all movement ceased.*¹¹⁷

The Einsteinian idea is that the sense of stillness that the passengers would experience would be an illusion created by the combination of the speed of trains with the coincidence of the time that they pass each other. LaFountain argues that Dalí captures this instant of *trompe l'oeil* on canvas: "What happens in *The Endless Enigma*, then, is that multiple moments of transition *do* occur, but they do so with such speed that they

¹¹⁵ For more on the humor within the painting see LaFountain p.96-100 and Hank Hine ed., *Persistence and Memory: New Critical Perspectives on Dalí*, 37-44.

¹¹⁶ Parkinson, *Surrealism, Art and Modern Science*, 183-184.

¹¹⁷ LaFountain p.85-86.

cancel each other out.”¹¹⁸ The comparison that LaFountain makes is interesting and plausible considering Dalí’s interest in science; however, Einstein’s Theory of Relativity was only one of the ideas that stood out to Dalí as proof for a new dimension of experience.

Dalí’s diary *The Secret Life* (1942) reveals how Dalí was also interested in Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis. Therefore, Dalí could have looked to Freud’s writings on the unconscious as evidence for his perspective on the existence of an alternate reality. Although Freud developed the unconscious as an idea and not as a physical space in the human mind, he was able to think of the unconscious as a space and exemplify his model through the old-fashioned Mystic Writing-pad. In his 1915 paper, “The Unconscious,” Freud discussed the temporality of the unconscious: “The processes of the system [unconscious] are *timeless*, i.e. they are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all. Reference to time is bound up, once again, with the work of the system [consciousness].”¹¹⁹ For Freud, the unconscious is an immeasurable space that is not affected by the passage of time. As Mary Ann Doane writes, “[Freud] was able to think of the unconscious as a space, a storehouse, a place outside of time, infinitely accommodating, where nothing is ever lost or destroyed...but there is no contradiction between its elements, which are all simply *there*.”¹²⁰ Seen from this Freudian perspective, *The Endless Enigma* could be a literal

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, “The Unconscious” (1915) as quoted in Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002) 36-37.

¹²⁰ Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*, p42.

representation of the unconscious with its temporality and images that exist simultaneously without one over-powering another.

By solely aligning *The Endless Enigma* to the Theory of Relativity or psychoanalysis critics have lost Dalí's vision of totality. Dalí did read about the findings of Freud, Einstein and Lacan, but he saw their theories as equally significant for his perspective on multiple co-existing realities. Therefore, the viewer's task is not to decide among these theories but to view the multiple perspectives on the world and understand that they all have power and exist in reality. Dalí thought reality is full of different dimensions—not unlike the separate and interwoven images within *The Endless Enigma*—that are individually irrational, but collectively rational. *The Endless Enigma* was Dalí's way of showing the viewer that it is futile to choose one idea over another. Rather, he used *The Endless Enigma* to explain reality, asserting that the world is richer and more complex than evident in just the findings of either science or psychoanalysis. With *The Endless Enigma*, Dalí gave visual form to his belief in the paradox of reality. While the individual ideas that compose a paradox seem self-contradictory or absurd, together, the paradox becomes the expression of a rational truth. Therefore, the individual images within *The Endless Enigma* represent the singular dimensions of reality that are irrational on their own. Through paranoiac-criticism; however, the images can be connected into a vision of truth, an expression of an irrational paradox.

With *The Endless Enigma*, Dalí envisioned his multi-dimensional world and achieved his goal to indict the traditional notion of reality. Subsequently, in the 1940s, he could turn to new interests in cinema and the natural sciences and leave the Surrealist

movement.¹²¹ As La Fountain notes, “With its concrete irrationality fully realized and blooming in 1938, the stage was set for Dalí’s departure from surrealism.”¹²² Dalí had joined the Surrealists in 1929, as he, like they, wanted to destroy accepted ideas of reality, but they were hoping to find a point where the rational took over from the irrational. By contrast, Dalí, as he demonstrated in *The Endless Enigma*, set out to view the world as an irrational paradox.

¹²¹ For more on what Dalí pursued after creating *The Endless Enigma* see Robert Descharnes and Gilles Néret, *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989* (Los Angeles: Taschen, 2010) 123-219.

¹²² LaFountain, *Post Modernism*, p.70.

The Legacy of Dalí's Paranoid-Critical Method

On 28 September 1974, the Dalí Theatre-museum was inaugurated and became the largest 'surrealistic' work of art in the world. In 1961, Dalí began planning the construction and decoration of this famous museum in Figueras Spain and in 1989 Dalí died in the tower, Torre Galatea, which is directly connected to the museum. The former Municipal Theatre that Dalí went to as a child was destroyed during the Spanish Civil War; therefore, Dalí turned the ruins of the earlier structure into the Theatre-museum to honor his hometown and lifetime inspiration. Visitors travel across the world to see this awe-inspiring building; it is an artwork on its own, but it also contains a large collection of Dalí's works, and his remains in an unmarked crypt in the main exhibition hall.¹²³

As Dalí planned, lived in and eventually died in this museum, the exterior and interior of the structure simultaneously reflect Dalí's eccentric personality and intellectual capacity. Dalí's artistic vision is brought to life with the egg forms that outline the roof of the museum and its dynamic interior, which toys with the viewer at every turn. Not unlike Dalí's own flamboyant personality, viewers can perceive the Theatre-museum as an entertaining spectacle without uncovering its deeper significance. Dalí himself explained that "[he] was...the king of nonsense, the clown, the street juggler; no one grasped the pent-up force and Nietzschean willpower behind the external appearance."¹²⁴ What Dalí exposed to the public was a deliberate show to attract fame around the world. He was meticulous and his works of art from film to painting to architecture were all

¹²³ For more information on the Dalí Theatre- Museum see Ades ed., *Dalí's Optical Illusions*, p64.

¹²⁴ Dalí, *Diary of a Genius*, as quoted in Weidemann, *Salvador Dalí*, p.29.

intentional. For that reason, Dalí's Theatre-museum can be seen as his final statement on the irrationality of reality.

Even though Dalí already envisioned his paranoid-critical method with *The Endless Enigma* (1938) and then pursued other interests in America, he returned to Spain after World War II to make his architectural statement of paranoiac-criticism with the Dalí Theatre-museum. While walking through the building is definitely entertaining, the museum interrogates the viewers' perception of reality and questions if it is possible to truly see something from only one perspective. As viewers navigate through the museum they are confronted with a shocking 'new' world, which may force them to re-evaluate their vision and what they understand about the reality they live in. In discussing this museum, the director Antoni Pitxot (b. 1934) writes, "With his optical experiments, Dalí succeeds in stimulating the viewer's ability to scrutinize the visual world. He does so to such effect that some visitors to his Theater-Museum in Figueres see double images even where none exist."¹²⁵ In other words, the museum encourages viewers to see each room through the lens of paranoiac-criticism. Upon standing outside one of the elaborate doorways, the viewers' eyes make an irrational connection between the paintings on the wall and the furniture on the ground so that the room becomes a glaring face at one moment and a welcoming gallery at the next. Instead of being able to rationalize each individual object, viewers are faced with multiple forms and meanings from the entrance to the exit.

¹²⁵ Antonio Pitxot is the director of the Dalí Theatre-museum, he was also a frequent companion of Dalí and his discussions with Dalí and his own study of Dalí's museum can be found in Ades ed., *Dalí's Optical Illusions* p. 64.

As Dalí believed that it is inadequate to look at reality through only one perspective, he visualized a world composed of multiple dimensions of experience in his Theatre-museum just as he had done with *The Endless Enigma* (1938). Despite the similar level of artistic and intellectual achievement in this museum and *The Endless Enigma*, the Theatre-museum is one of the most popular museums in the world and *The Endless Enigma* remains under-appreciated in the Reina Sofia museum in Madrid. Even though viewers can interpret both artworks as a joke, the Theatre-museum is more visually stimulating and *The Endless Enigma* is a complex work that requires time and patience for it to be understood.

The Endless Enigma, however, is worth the frustration that it instills. Scholars who dismiss this painting do so because they either misunderstand it or have not spent enough time looking at it. Breton similarly struggled with *The Endless Enigma*, as in his 1939 article “Recent tendencies of surrealist painting” he wrote, “[Dalí’s] determination to rarefy his paranoiac method still further has reduced him to concocting entertainments on the level of *crossword puzzles*.”¹²⁶ Breton’s criticism of Dalí’s artwork from the late 1930s is a common yet misguided interpretation of *The Endless Enigma*. Dalí himself denounced Breton’s opinion of his multiple images by incorporating an earlier quote from Breton in the catalogue for his exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in 1939. In 1934, Breton had supported Dalí’s method by claiming, “Dalí has endowed Surrealism with an instrument of primary importance, in particular the paranoiac-critical method, which has immediately shown itself capable of being applied equally to painting, poetry,

¹²⁶ André Breton, “New Tendencies in Painting,” as quoted in Ades ed., *Dalí’s Optical Illusions*, p.130.

the cinema.”¹²⁷ Dalí intentionally used this quote on the occasion of the first public showing of *The Endless Enigma* to demonstrate that he envisioned paranoiac-criticism in this painting; he did not create a crossword puzzle.

Through the paranoid-critical method Dalí gave form to his viewpoint on the complexity of the world and inspired others to do the same. Indeed, *The Endless Enigma* is the best example of Dalí’s visual expression of his perspective on reality through paranoiac-criticism. With this unique painting, Dalí shows that there are multiple ways to confront reality, and that no one perspective is enough. Beyond Dalí’s suggestion to accept the world for all of its complexities, however, *The Endless Enigma* leaves the viewer with several questions and almost no answers. *The Endless Enigma* asks what is reality and how is it formed? Is reality what is absorbed by the senses or a notion that the human mind creates? Dalí poses these queries, but he leaves them unanswered, as for Dalí the debate over reality cannot and should not be resolved. Dalí asserts that to analyze the human mind, as psychoanalysts do, or the external world, as physicists do, would achieve only a partial explanation of the complex notion of reality. While it is important to interrogate the world, it is equally important to realize that reality is an irrational concept that can never be understood from only one perspective. The point that Dalí made with *The Endless Enigma* is that before individuals can even attempt to grasp their own experience of reality, they must first acknowledge the multiple dimensions that exist within their psyche and the universe as a whole.

Dalí was a multi-faceted person; he was an entertainer, actor, artist and intellectual. Throughout his life, he researched, wrote, gave lectures and created

¹²⁷ Breton’s 1934 lecture in Brussels “What is Surrealism?” as quoted in Ades ed., *Dalí’s Optical Illusions*, p.130.

powerful artworks that continue to impact the art world. Dalí himself was aware of the impact that he would have on the world of art at a young age. In 1920, he wrote, “I will be a genius, and the world will admire me. I will be despised and misunderstood, but I’ll be a genius, a great genius, I am sure of it.”¹²⁸ Dalí is one of the most recognizable and widely discussed artists from the twentieth-century; however, like reality, there remain dimensions of Dalí’s personality and art to be uncovered.

¹²⁸ Dalí, *Un Diari, 1919-1920: Les Meves Impressions I records íntims*, published by Felix Fanes in 1994, as quoted in Weidemann, *Salvador Dalí*, p.16.

Images in order that they were discussed:

Opening Scene of *Un Chien andalou*:



Scene with ants crawling from the protagonist's palm:



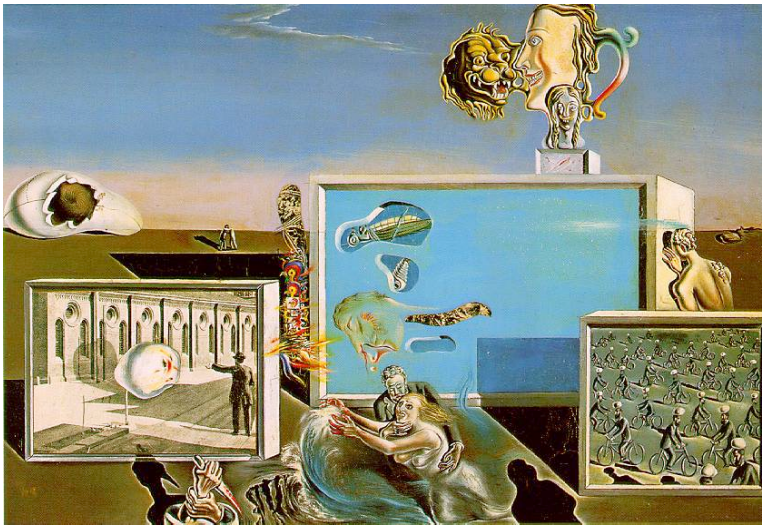
Cenicientas (1927-1928):



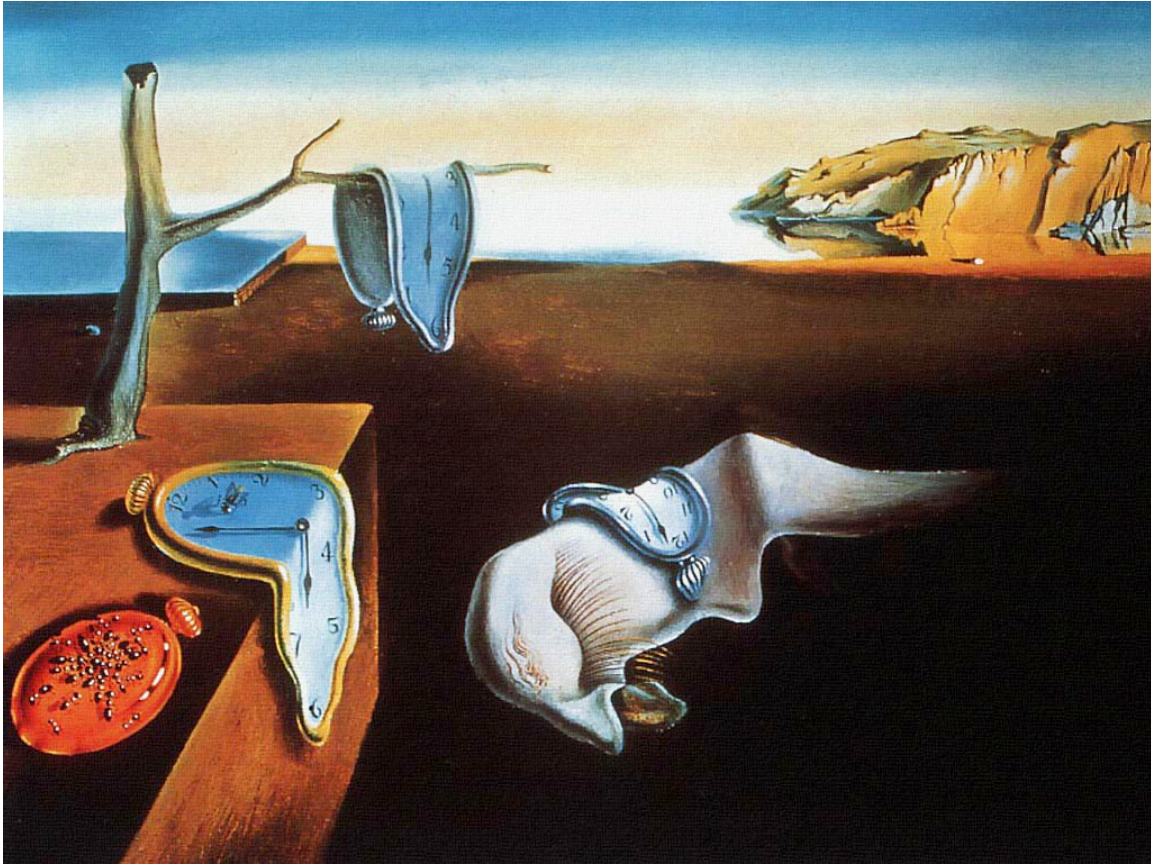
The First Days of Spring (1929):



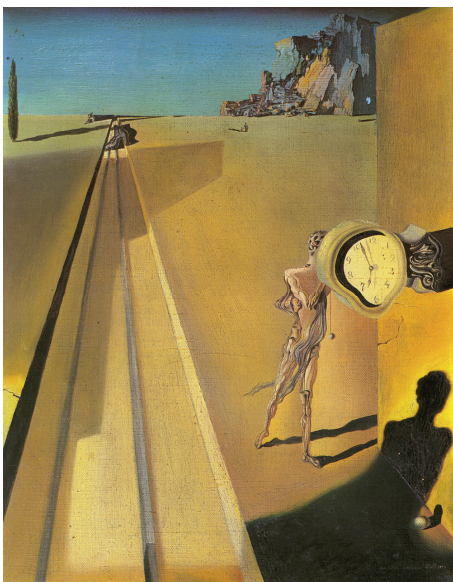
Illumined Pleasures (1929):



The Persistence of Memory (1931):



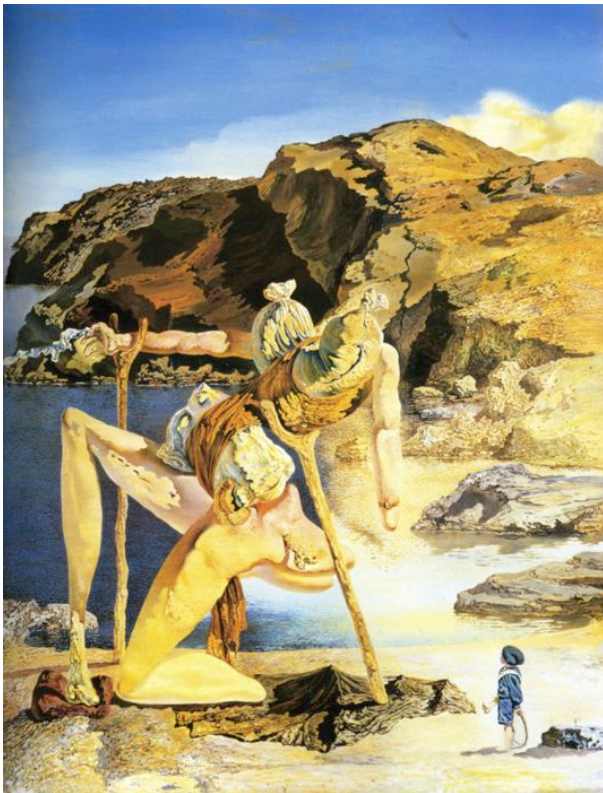
Premature Ossification of a Railroad Station (1930):



The Great Masturbator (1929):



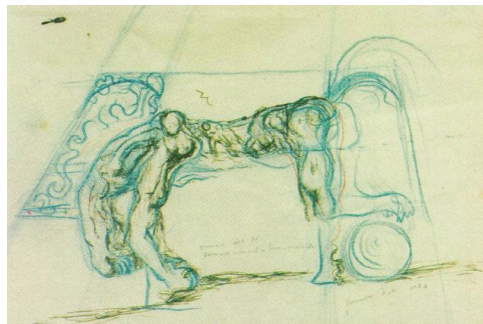
The Specter of Sex Appeal (1934):



The Phantom Cart (1933):



Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion (1930):



Postcard that Dalí received from Picasso in 1931, Front and Side View:



Paranoiac Visage (1935) The Postcard Transformed:



The Enigma of Hitler (1936):



Apparition of Face and a Fruit Dish on a Beach (1938):



The Endless Enigma (1938):



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List of Illustrations

Film: *Un Chien andalou* (1929) by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí

Paintings:

Salvador Dalí

Cenicitas, (also: *Summer Forces* and: *Birth of Venus*) 1927-1928

Oil on panel, 64 x 48 cm

Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid

Salvador Dalí

The First Days of Spring, 1929

Oil and collage on panel, 50.2 x 65 cm

Salvador Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida

Salvador Dalí

Illumined Pleasures, 1929

Oil and collage on panel, 24 x 34.5 cm

The Sidney und Harriet Janis Collection,

Gift to the Museum of Modern Art, New York

Salvador Dalí

The Persistence of Memory, 1931

Oil on canvas, 24 x 33 cm

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Salvador Dalí

Premature Ossification of a Railroad Station, 1930

Oil on canvas, 31.5 x 27 cm

Private Collection

Salvador Dalí

The Great Masturbator 1929

Oil on canvas, 110 x 150 cm

Gift from Dalí to the Spanish state

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

Salvador Dalí

The Specter of Sex Appeal, 1934

Oil on canvas, 18 x 14 cm

Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueras

Salvador Dalí
The Phantom Cart, 1933
Oil on panel, 19 x 24.1 cm
Private Collection, Geneva

Salvador Dalí
Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion, (also: Paranoiac Woman-Horse) 1930
Oil on canvas, 50.2 x 65.2 cm
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

Salvador Dalí
"Communication: paranoiac face," *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*, no. 3,
Paris December 1931.

Salvador Dalí
Paranoiac Visage 1935
Oil on panel, 14.5 x 22.5 cm
Private Collection

Salvador Dalí
The Enigma of Hitler, 1937
Oil on canvas, 51.2 x 79.3 cm
Gift from Dalí to the Spanish state
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

Salvador Dalí
Apparition of Face and a Fruit Dish on a Beach, 1938
Oil on canvas, 114.8 x 143.8 cm
Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, the Ella Gallup

Salvador Dalí
The Endless Enigma, 1938
Oil on canvas, 114.3 x 145 cm
Gift from Dalí to the Spanish state
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.