

THE WORK OF SIGMUND FREUD AS REFLECTED  
IN THE ARTIST SALVADOR DALI

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Thesis topic: The philosophy of Sigmund Freud as reflected in the Surrealist artist Salvador Dali.

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## Introduction

Philosophy is the study of being. As we can see in the world about us there are different types of being, and we also know those beings which are only creations of reason.

In the following paper we shall deal with a part of Philosophy called Psychology, which studies the animate mobile being. And within this area we shall be concerned with the highest of these animate mobile beings--namely; the intellectual being, man. However, man as a whole will not be studied, be only that remarkable part of man----the mind.

One of the greatest steps forward in the understanding of the workings of the mind has been made by Sigmund Freud. We shall give briefly Freud's division of the unconscious mind of man. Also to understand this probing, an explanation of repressions, complexes, and drives, as Freud saw them, will be given. This shall be the foundation for his theories of Psychoanalysis, the method of interpreting the unconscious. We shall be especially interested in the Dream-Work of Freud, as finding in it the foundations of the new artistic movement called Surrealism.

Surrealism has different forms of expression---Literature, Poetry, Drama, and Art. It is in this last form, that of Art, that we shall look for this Freudian reflection. As an example of Surrealistic art we have chosen one of the most recognized of the Surrealists--Salvador Dali--as a subject of study. We shall study three paintings, in particular, of Dali: Birth of

Liquid Desire, Illumined Pleasures, and Imperial Monument to the Child-Woman.

It is our aim therefore, by close analysis of three of Salvador Dali's paintings to demonstrate that the theories and thoughts of Sigmund Freud were used as a foundation of Surrealistic Art.

## Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud was born on May 6, 1856 in Freiburg in what is now Czechoslovakia, of Jewish parents. At the age of four the family moved to Vienna. In the Gymnasium Freud was the first in his class. He continued his studies and although he said he had no "particular predilection for a career of a physician," he later decided to become a medical student. Freud studied at the University of Vienna. Early in his medical schooling he began experimental investigations on the nervous system of fish. Later after receiving his medical degree Freud continued his research in nervous diseases in his spare time. Breuer's treatment of hysteria by hypnosis opened new doors for him. Freud pursued the nervous system further under the direction of Charcot, the neurologist, at the Sorbonne. In 1895 Freud with Breuer, as a partner, published Studies in Hysteria. After this Freud went on his own and began using his own new method of treating hysteria by "free association." Then in 1900 Freud set forth his doctrine in his Interpretation of Dreams.

By 1904 the Viennese Psycho-Analytic Society had been formed and by 1910 the International Psycho-Analytic Association was established. Freud also had published Psychopathology of the Everyday Life and Origin and Development of Psycho-Analysis within this time. It was also in this period Freud and a number

of his associates disagreed; this resulted in Adler, Stekel, Rand, and Jung disassociating themselves from Freud. After 1912 Freud gave most of his time to directing the Society, writing, and lecturing. In 1915 he wrote the Unconscious and was mainly occupied with that area till 1920, when the work on the repression began. This work produced Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Ego and the Id. In his later works Freud turned to the cultural problems of the world in his The Future of an Illusion (1927), Civilization and its Discontents (1929), and Moses and Monotheism. (1939).

In 1938 the Nazi force invade Austria and Freud was forced to leave the country for his own safety and that of his family. In late 1938 Freud, who had developed a cancer of the mouth, arrived in England with his wife and daughter, Anna. It was there that Sigmund Freud died on September 23, 1939 in Hampstead, London.

### The Unconscious

Consciousness is the awareness of ourselves and things outside of us, this we all know. In light of this statement we can conclude that the unconsciousness is an unawareness either of ourselves or of objects outside ourselves, or of both ourselves and objects outside ourselves. There is no doubt of the existence of a physiological unconsciousness, for we are not continually aware of our heartbeat, digestion, and all the other automatic operations of the body.

Freud came to the conclusion after studying many cases of

mental disorders that there was a source other than the conscious part of the mind that was influencing the behavior and thoughts of these people. While first working in cases of hysteria with Breuer, Freud used Breuer's method of hypnosis to reach the patient's unknown fears and causes for his hysteria. However, this method did not succeed in uncovering these causes. When the patient was asked to relate a painful experience a mental block was formed and the patient could go no further.<sup>2</sup>

From this Freud arrived at his idea of the repression in the unconscious. In fact, Freud said "We obtain our concepts of the unconscious from the theories of repression."<sup>3</sup> Freud divided the unconscious into two parts - the repressed unconscious and the non-repressed unconscious.

In the non-repressed unconscious Freud placed the potentialities or dispositions we can only know when they emerge as conscious activities of one kind or another. More definitely in this part of the unconscious are those things which are transmitted by birth - such as, instincts and talents.<sup>4</sup> The non-repressed unconscious can also bear a collective or radical racial character in the form of psychic dispositions of a super individual nature;<sup>5</sup> due to hereditary, racial, or human heritage. This part of the unconscious is most basic, according to Freud. "If inherited functions exist in the human being, these constitute the nucleus of the unconscious."<sup>6</sup>

The other part of unconscious, that is, the repressed unconscious is most important in Freudian thought. Repression

is defined as:

An automatic, unthinking, involuntary rejection of a disturbing complex into the realm of unawareness where it is entirely removed from consciousness, but it remains dynamic and is unrecalable by ordinary physiological methods.

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In this part of the unconscious Freud places repressions, mostly of which, originated during the childhood years, when the impulses are intense and the defences against them are undeveloped; which results in the repression due to the anxiety of the child to express himself.

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The main factor of this repression, according to Freud, is basically the sexual drive of man; in fact, Freud said that the sexual drive or instinct is the cause of all the actions of man. The particular phase (that of the sex instinct) will be enlarged later in this paper.

In order to try to reach the repressed unconscious Freud developed a new method to help the patient to relate what was in his unconscious. This method Freud called "Pressing and Encouraging him (the patient)". In this method Freud would place his hand on the patient's forehead when a block in the flow of memories appeared. But it soon became evident that this method would not be successful in all cases.

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As a result, a new method developed. This method Freud called "Free Association", and in it the patient was asked...

...to say whatever came into his head, while ceasing to give any conscious direction to his thoughts. It was essential, however, that he should bind himself to report literally everything that occurred to his self preception,

and not to give way to any critical objections which sought to put certain associations on one side on the ground that they were not sufficiently important or that they were irrelevant or that they were altogether meaningless."

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By this method Freud was able to reach the traumatic experience which the other method failed in doing. Using this method of free association Freud developed his theory of psycho-analysis, which is the endeavor to discover the origin and causes of mental states.<sup>12</sup> It is not our concern here to explain psycho-analysis but to delve more into the contents of the unconscious.

With an sweeping look at the psychic life of man, the conscious and the unconscious; Freud divided the human personality in different parts as to the relations between parts and the external world.<sup>13</sup> Freud named these parts the 'ego', the 'id', and the 'superego'. The 'id' contains everything which is transmitted with birth and is involved in the constitution of the body-<sup>14</sup> hence, above all, the instincts rooted in the bodily organisms. The 'ego' is part of the 'id'.<sup>15</sup> And the superego is the conscious which is the representative of all moral restrictions,<sup>16</sup> and the advocate of the impulse toward perfection.

As was stated above, Freud believed that the basic drive of man was the sex instinct. In fact, all the instincts are essentially of a sexual nature and they remain so whatever modifications they undergo.<sup>17</sup> In Freudian language of psycho-analysis these all come under the common name of the libido. The<sup>18</sup> function of the libido is to produce ideas for the unconscious.

Freud's theory of sexuality is unique because he postulated that the sexual instinct is active long before the sex life in an individual (that is, in the more common idea of the sex life starting at puberty) begins to manifest itself.

All conflicts are between the 'ego' and the sex instinct and Freud says this begins at birth and lasts until we die. Our sex life is divided into three periods by Freud. The first period is the infantile sexuality, within which are three phases: the oral phase, the anal phase, and the phallic phase. Each phase is named after that part of the body which is the center of sex stimuli for the infant. The second period in the sexual development is called the latent period, situated approximately between the sixth and ninth years. During this period any expression of sex is repressed and dismissed from the conscious. <sup>19</sup> The final period is puberty, the period of adult sexuality begins to develop. It is in this period that neurosis appear which stem from the unconscious sexual conflicts of the first period, infancy.

As a direct result of the sexual conflicts in the unconscious is the complex. A complex is a dominant idea in the realm of the unconscious, around which is assembled the phalanx of <sup>20</sup> primitive, repressed emotions of infantile or sexual natures. Freud names the three main types of complexes as: "the Oedipus complex, the Inferiority complex, and the Castration complex.

The Oedipus complex - named after the Greek tragedy character - occupies the central place in Freud's explanation, not only

of neurosis, but of human activity in general - in particular, human culture. The Oedipus complex is an abnormal emotional attitude of a person toward his family, or in a narrower sense towards his father and mother.<sup>21</sup>

An inferiority complex can be conscious or unconscious in nature. It is mainly produced by bodily deficiencies or infirmities, ultimately based on the sexual power, in an individual so much so that they are experienced psychologically, thus resulting in a feeling of inferiority.<sup>22</sup>

The Castration complex is the unconscious of being deprived of the sexual organs. This complex develops mostly at the end of the phallic stage of the infancy period.

#### The Dream Work

With this general knowledge of the unconscious we want to consider closely the main method by which Freud revealed the contents of the unconscious. Freud believed he found the "royal road" into the unconscious in the analysis of the dream.<sup>23</sup> Freud saw dreams as representative of a condition "in which the material in the unconscious 'id' has as prospect of forcing its way into the 'ego' and into the consciousness and in which the 'ego' arms itself afresh against these invasions."<sup>24</sup>

The contents of dreams was divided into two classifications. The dream recalled upon awakening was designated as the manifest dream. The second type was the meaning underlying the reported dream, this was called the latent dream thoughts.<sup>25</sup>

The manifest dream content is often absurd and inconsequential.

This is due to the fact that what is in the unconscious cannot break into the conscious undisguised, for their entrance into the conscious in their true shape would renew the conflict which originally caused them to be in the unconscious.<sup>26</sup> Freud explains the manifest dream as "no more than a distorted, abbreviated, and misunderstood translation, and usually a translation into visual images."<sup>27</sup>

Freud says, "The latent dream thoughts contain the meaning of the dream."<sup>28</sup> However, because of the disguised ideas due to the censorship of the conscious, certain mechanisms are used by the unconscious so as to disguise their true form. Freud named these mechanisms to be: (1) condensation, (2) displacement, (3) symbolism,<sup>29</sup> (4) dramatization, and (5) secondary elaboration.

In looking at these different mechanisms we find that condensation is the process by which several different ideas or wishes in the latent content are expressed by a single item in the manifest dream content. For example, one person in a dream may really represent a number of individuals. Condensation is said to serve the purpose of economy of presentation and of distortion, as as to escape censorship.<sup>30</sup>

The second mechanism, called displacement, causes a shifting of the affective, or emotional, tendency from the real significant element in the latent content to another idea in the manifest content, with which it is in some way associated. For instance, a bridge may be the center of attention in a dream, but the latent dream thought may be concerned with what happened

on the bridge.

The most important of these mechanisms for Freud was symbolism. And because of its importance and its relation to surrealism a special section will be devoted to this point. Here just a short definition and explanation will suffice. Symbolism means the use of one idea or thing to represent another. Just as the color red usually indicates danger and so on.

Dramatization is the process by which abstract ideas are represented in concrete forms and images. This is quite recognizable in dreams. For example, when dreaming of the idea of superfluity, superfluity as such is not dreamed of, but the idea of a tank so filled with a liquid that it is running over the sides is dreamed of instead.

Lastly, the secondary elaboration is the attempt to construct the condensed, symbolic, dramatized, and fragmentary elements of the dream work into a single and coherent whole.

Dreams, therefore, because of the different mechanisms used need to be interpreted to find the true latent dream meaning. Freud's theory for this interpretation of dreams was put forth in his work called the Dream Work.<sup>32</sup> Freud felt that the interpretation of dreams opened a new approach to the depths of mental life, he wrote:

This theory (dream interpretation) occupied a peculiar position in the history of psychoanalysis; it marks a turning-point. With the theory of dreams, analysis passed from being a psychotherapeutic method to being a psychology of the depths of human nature. Ever since then the theory of dreams has remained the most characteristic

and the most peculiar feature of the young science, knowledge, a new-found land, which has been reclaimed from the regions of Folklore and Mysticism. 33

There are especially two methods in interpreting dreams. The first is called the "free association" method.<sup>34</sup> By this method Freud attempts to follow back through associations connected with the dream until he arrives at the latent dream thoughts which are in the repressed unconscious. The second method is the interpretation of symbols according to the interpreters knowledge of Freud's fixed symbols and the knowledge of the subject.<sup>35</sup>

Freud felt that his work on the dream state was a finding not only for the mentally disturbed but for all. In Freud's words:

The theoretical importance of this conformity between dreams and symptoms is illuminating. Since dreams are not pathological phenomena, the fact shows that the mental mechanisms which produce the symptoms of illness are equally present in normal mental life, that the same uniform law embraced both the normal and the abnormal and that the findings of research into neurotics or psychotics cannot be without significance for our understanding of the healthy mind. 36

### Symbolism

Symbolism plays a predominant part in the Freudian system of interpreting the unconscious through dreams. In connection with the surrealist art movement these symbols are used directly as Freud named them. These symbols are not insignificant objects which really have no meaning at all, but they are the manifestations of the repressions and complexes of the unconscious.

Dreams are not biological phenomena but a principle the whole  
Freudian system is built on - they are "mental phenomena".<sup>37</sup>

As in literature symbolism plays an important role - using  
an object to stand for an idea or act - most of these symbols  
are carried over into dreams also. After studying many cases  
of repressions, complexes, and other mental states, Freud came  
to the conclusion that certain objects are always symbolized  
in the same way. Thus resulted a number of fixed symbols.  
In Great Books of the Western World (edited by Robert Maynard  
Hutchins, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Incorporated. 1955,  
Vol. 54, "General Introduction to Psycho-analysis") between pages  
504 and 513 Freud gives his main fixed symbols. In general the  
human body as a whole and parts, parents, children, brothers,  
sisters, death and nakedness are the most basic objects symbol-  
ized. However, Freud concentrated mostly on the sexual symbols.

For the male organ Freud names the serpent, key, and tie as  
the most important symbols. I shall not give an explanation  
for each symbol for this is a major work in itself, but give  
only what the symbol stands for. As other symbols for the male  
organ Freud lists: sticks, umbrellas, poles, trees, knives,  
daggers, lances, sabres, guns, pistols, revolvers, water falls,  
water-cans, springs, pulley lamps, pencils, penholders, nail-files,  
hammers, implements, plows, balloons, places, reptiles, fishes,  
hats, clocks, machinery, mushrooms, mountains, and rocks: in  
general, any object of the same shape.

Symbols which represent the female organs are mainly rooms.

vessels, and flowers; also pits, hollows, caves, jars, bottles, boxes, chests, pockets, ships, cupboards, stoves, doors and gates, wood, paper, tables, books, snails and mussels, horse-shoes, churches and chapels, eyes, shoes, linen, apples, peaches, fruit, in general, and landscapes.

The sexual act is symbolized in a number of different ways: dancing, riding, climbing, steep stairways, lock and key, ladders, and chimney sweepers.

Parents are usually symbolized by persons of high rank, such as kings, queens, emperors, presidents, and the like. While children, brothers and sisters are seen as small animals and vermin.

Death has the same symbols as in literature, that is the skull, the skeleton, or the idea of going on a journey.

Human beings as a whole are represented in various ways. An excited, passionately aroused person is usually seen as a wild animal. Also the symbol for the part serves as a symbol for the whole person, depending upon the dream as a whole.

The last general ideas symbolized is nakedness. This is usually symbolized either first - with no symbol at all, that is nude; or second - by the opposite, of being clothed in a uniform.

All these symbols for Freud are taken in light of each person they are related with, but as a general policy these objects symbolized what has been stated above.

Freud on Art

It is true Freud was never an artist but it is important here to note just what function he thought the artist had. And how later his theory was put into practice. In one of his lectures Freud referred to the artist in these words:

Before you leave today I should like to direct your attention for a moment to a side of phantasy-life of very general interest. There is, in fact, a path from phantasy back again to reality, and that is - art. The artist has also an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become neurotic. He is one who is urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous; he longs to attain to honor, power, riches, fame, and the love of women; but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So, like any other with an unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interests, and all his libido too, onto the creation of his wishes in the life of phantasy, from which the way might readily lead to neurosis. There must be factors in combination to prevent this becoming the whole outcome of his development; it is well known how often artists in particular suffer from partial inhibition of their capacities through neurosis. Probably their constitution is endowed with a powerful capacity for sublimation and with a certain flexibility in the repressions determining the conflict. But the way back to reality is found by the artist thus: He is not the only one who has a life of phantasy; the intermediate world of phantasy is sanctioned by general human consent and every hungry soul looks to it for comfort and consolation. But to those who are not artists the gratification that can be drawn from the springs of phantasy is very limited; their inexorable repressions prevent the enjoyment of all but the meager daydreams which can become conscious. A true artist has more at his disposal. First of all he understands how to elaborate his daydreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and become

enjoyable to others; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected. Further, he possesses the mysterious ability to mold his particular material until it expresses the ideas of his phantasy faithfully; and then he knows how to attach to this reflection of his phantasy-life so strong a stream of pleasure that, for a time at least, the repressions are out balanced and dispelled by it. When he can do all this, he opens out to ~~to~~ others the way back to the comfort and consolation of their unconscious sources of pleasure, and so reaps their gratitude and admiration; then he has won -through phantasy - what before he could only win in phantasy: honor, power, and the love of women."

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Freud also felt that the artist was the only person who could really express the unconscious in a most complete way.

Only in one field has the omnipotence of thought been retained in our own civilization, namely, in art. In art alone, it still happens that man, consumed by his wishes produces something similar to the gratification of these wishes, and this playing, thanks to artistic illusion, calls forth effects as if it were something real.

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So we can see just from these two passages that Freud not only considered art and the artists, but also was actually unknowingly laying the foundation for the Surrealist Art Movement.

## Surrealism

Surrealism, like the United States of America, came to be from conflict and revolt, and just as the United States had its Declaration of Independence, so too did the Surrealistic movement have its manifesto. The Surrealistic movement had its Thomas Jefferson--Andre Breton--and also a few Benedict Arnold's --one of whom was Salvador Dali.

Surrealism, or superrealism, followed Dadaism as the next step in 20th-century Expressionism. First let us just see what Expressionism is. "Expressionism implies an exploration of the world of emotions and psychological states as well as the protests against existing conditions on the external world."<sup>40</sup> The sparks that ignited the conflagration of 20th-century Expressionism were struck by the discovery of the "primitive arts of the South Sea Islanders, ... wood carvings of African Negro tribes, and psychological probings of Sigmund Freud."<sup>41</sup> Note here that Sigmund Freud is listed as a cause of the movement. This new idea of art is based on Freud's discoveries in the psychological world of the unconscious. Fleming in his book Arts and Ideas says:

The expressionistic painter, for instance is perfectly aware of the world he sees through his eyes, but he is interested in a form of vision for which he must close his eyes so that he can paint his dream fantasies. Accordingly he has departed from the classical notion of art as an imitation of nature, and moved into the worlds of the mind, spirit, and imagination, which demand new psychological insights and symbols. These intangible worlds are much more difficult to see and write about than the one that comes through the organs of sense perception alone. The results of these

excursions into the subconscious may be uneven, but the artist's passport to such nether region is quite valid.<sup>42</sup>

The 20th-century Expressionism took on different forms; Cubism forwarded by Cezanne, Futurism with Duchamp, Neo-Primitivism, Dream Phantasies, Dadaism, then Surrealism.<sup>43</sup> All these forms of Expressionism have their elements of Freudianism; but our main concern is Surrealism.

The word Surrealism was coined by the French critic and playwright Guillaume Apollinaire at the art exhibit in the Paris season of 1911-12.<sup>44</sup> The movement was founded in the years immediately following World War I. Upon the return of the young intellectuals from the front, they discovered in the old thinkers and artists an inadequacy to relate their own thoughts and states of mind. There was a break with the old, a revolt. One of the main leaders to step forward was Andre Breton.<sup>45</sup>

Andre Breton was one of the first Frenchmen who was not a psycho-analyst to study Freud. And after studying Freud he concluded that "Freud is one of the greatest forces in helping modern man to rediscover the meaning and vitality of words."<sup>46</sup> Breton became the leader of the Surrealistic movement, and as a leader he excommunicated some Surrealists in terms of infidelity to beliefs of Surrealism. "Applying Freudian methods to the problems of artistic creation, Breton evolved the theory and indeed a practice of aesthetic automatism which is the essential feature of Surrealism."<sup>47</sup> In 1924 appeared Breton's first manifesto of Surrealism and later, in 1930, the second manifesto

appeared. One can draw a summary of five points which have not fluctuated in the minds and the works of Surrealists based on these manifestos:

1. That the dreams in the subconscious life of man are most important. "The teachings of Freud are all important in seeing to validate the practice of automatic writing or direct note taking of one's subconscious states." 48

2. The human mind is able to attain a state where forces which appear opposed are harmonized as unified into one force. From this the conclusion that the resolution of dream and reality is conceived as being absolute reality or Sur-reality.

3. The third belief is concerned with the autonomy between man and nature, the conviction that one is of a different order than the other, and therefore there exists between the two a perpetual state of discord.

4. That due to the upheaval caused by the war a psychic change took place in the young generation. This new outlook must be fought for and expressed.

5. The fifth belief is essentially psychological in nature:

It is concerned with the distinction between the self and the 'ego'. (The Freudian use of the word self and 'ego'.) It is precisely here in this domain of self, as separate from the domain of the 'ego', that the Surrealist believes he may take down the dictation of his thought during the time when there is a total absence of any control exercised by his reason or by any aesthetic or moral code. 49

A basis for both manifestos is Freud's teaching of the dream and the unconscious. For the Surrealist "the work of art derives its power from the unconscious--more particularly from

the deepest layer of the unconscious which the Freudians call the 'id'.<sup>50</sup> With this brief insight into Surrealism we can conclude with Sheldon Cheney's book A Primer of Modern Art that:

in general the Surrealist have turned symbolistic and psycho-revelatory. They paint what they find in dreams and subjective ramblings and exotic desires. Certainly there is a Freudian angle in their approach to art. 51

### Salvador Dali

Of all the Surrealistic artists Salvador Dali is the most outstanding. Dali was born on May 11, 1904 in Figueras, Spain. As a boy, Dali attended two schools: the first a public school, and the second, a private institution operated by the Brothers of the Marist Order. As a child Dali's interest in art revealed itself on Church walls, cardboard, and sack cloth. At the age of seven, after having painted Helen of Troy, Her Heart Full of Memories, Regarding a Tower, and Joseph among his Brothers, Dali passed into the Impressionistic period of his art. Salvador was not satisfied with his style and went on to experiment with Cubism and Futurism.<sup>52</sup>

In 1921 Dali attended the School of Fine Arts in Madrid. According to Wallace Fowlie in his work Age of Surrealism he says of Dali:

Natively he was a Surrealist before becoming one literally in Paris. When he was a student in Madrid, his teacher gave the class one day the subject of a Gothic Virgin to paint. Dali painted a pair of scales, and when the teacher remonstrated, the premature Surrealist replied that if the other students saw a Virgin he saw a pair of scales. 53

In 1928 Dali made his first trip to Paris, it was on this occasion he met Picasso and the writers Desnos and Eluard. It was there "he immediately found a vocation in Surrealism." 54

In 1929 Dali was recognized as a Surrealist artist.

In Freud, he read a justification for the intense love he had always felt for his childhood, for the terrors and ecstasies of his childhood. He learned, as a very special revelation, about the womb-like protection which sleep affords. Enthusiastically he accepted the leadership of André Breton and the principle doctrines of his manifestos. 55

However, a change came in 1930 when Dali expounded his own theories in "La Femine Visible." 56 Dali felt that Surrealism as an art movement was dying and he struck out anew. He said:

Nevertheless, my limp watches and the articles which appeared in "Minotaur" before the war were dazzling forerunners of a crisis of conscious. Dynamic matter was about to change Dali of Psycho-analysis into Dali of nuclear-physics. 57

But the leader of the Surrealists, Breton, says that Dali did not leave the movement, but was excommunicated from it for two reasons---1) "for having bartered his soul for money", and 2) "for having revealed Fascist tendencies." 58

Which of the two is correct is a matter of opinion. The main thing is that even though Dali did leave the movement, as such, he nevertheless continued to use Freud as a basis. In this new period Dali coins his own new terms to explain his art. He says:

Now I am ready to paint in a divisionist, rhinicerontic, anti-protonic manner in order to communicate the new cosmogony of our times,

the discontinuity of matter and nuclear  
mysticism. 59

In 1942 he wrote his autobiography The Secret Life of Salvador Dali. About 1950 Dali began a new period on his art--the religious period. Such paintings as Christ of St. John of the Cross (1951), Crucifixion (1954), The Sacrament of the Last Supper (1955) have been considered classics already.<sup>60</sup>

At the present Dali is working at his home in Costa Brava, Spain, on another religious picture. The subject matter is the Vision of Hell described as seen by the three children of Fatima on July 13, 1917.<sup>61</sup>

We shall consider in a more particular manner the reflection of Freud in Dali's art. First, in an overall look at his art, then a study of three particular pictures.

As André Breton stated in his 1924 manifesto, "Surrealism is pure psychic automatism by means of which one sets out to express verbally, in writing or in any other manner, the real functioning of thought without control by reason or any aesthetic or moral preoccupation."<sup>62</sup> The state in which this automatism overcomes a person is while he is dreaming while asleep, or those moments between the full awakening and complete sleep. Freud said the dream...

for the most part consists of visual images. Part of the difficulty of reciting a dream comes from the fact that we have to translate these images into words. "I can draw it," the dreamer says to us, "but I do not know how to put it into words."<sup>63</sup>

And that is exactly what Dali has done---drawn the dream. He

describes his pictures as "handpainted dream photographs".<sup>64</sup>  
And within these dream photos the Freudian ideas are illustrated "with symbols of assorted phobias, delusions, complexes, and other trappings of abnormal psychology".<sup>65</sup>

In considering Dali's many paintings one can find Freudian ideas in the titles alone, without even seeing the picture. Of course, one could immediately see the Freudian symbols, dream mechanisms, and complexes if the picture were reproduced here. We used the book Dali- a study of his life and work by A. Reynolds Morse as a basis because this is one of the few books which is devoted entirely to Dali's art and also because there are a hundred and twenty three reproductions contained therein.

There are a number of paintings that Dali directly says are from the dream world by naming them accordingly:

The Dream <sup>66</sup>

The Broken Bridge and the Dream (1945)

One Second Before Awakening from a Dream caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate (of this painting Dali says, "It is the only painting which transcribes a dream literally."<sup>67</sup>)

Dali expressed the repressions of Childhood in his paintings--

Myself at the Age of Ten, When I was a Grass-

hopper Child--(in this painting he says he "Symbolizes his nightmarish aversion to grasshoppers."<sup>68</sup>)

and also in

Myself at the Age of Six, Lifting with Extreme

Care the Skin of the Sea to Observe a Dog  
Sleeping in the Shadow of the Water.

The force of the libido are subject matter in

Illumined Pleasures

Birth of Liquid Desire

Accommodation of Desire

The Spector of Sex Appeal--(of this painting Dali says: "In this painting it was my object to draw a synonym of Freudian iconography."<sup>69</sup>)

Dali used as titles for two of his paintings one of the abnormal states studied and named by Freud.

Paranoia

Paranoniac Face

Dali paid a tribute to Freud in an excellent sketch, ink on blotting paper, Study of Freud as a "result of the artist's having met the great analyst in London and his long-standing interest in Freudian symbols, which abound in his earlier work."<sup>70</sup>

After seeing in a general way the reflection of Freud in Dali's art in the titles of his paintings, we shall now consider more closely three paintings in particular: Illumined Pleasures, Birth of Liquid Desires, and Imperial Monument to the Child-Woman. These three paintings have been chosen because Dali painted these when he was at his peak in using Freudian ideas; this was in 1929 to 1933. In considering these paintings we shall look for the different dream mechanisms--especially symbolism--complexes, and repressions.

The first painting we shall study is Imperial Monument to the Child-Woman, (Photo I) - oil on canvas, painted in 1929.

Before dissecting the painting into various parts the picture as a whole should be noted. Here an interesting observation can be made. The form or shape of the rising mass in the left of the painting can truly be said to be a pattern of the unconscious. This statement is based upon the research of Herbert Read and also of the analyst, Jung, in the field of Art and the unconscious. Read says:

I am going to suggest that there is an elementary stage during the course of which there occurs in the unconscious a formation or crystallization of plastic images out of the basic material provided by the internal sensations of the higher nervous system.

Photos II and IV are two reproductions out of the many drawings made by children and adults under the direction of Read and his assistants. The subjects were asked to close their eyes and try not to concentrate on anything in particular. Then they were to record on paper those images that were presented to their minds.

After much experimentation Read found that the number of images or archetypes the unconscious presents is relatively limited. He divided these into four general overlapping groups. They are:

- 1) cellular forms, amoeba-like in shape progressing to more definite enclosed womb-like forms,
- 2) this group is more dynamic, cells whirling, lines of

Photo I



A

B

C

D

force, cones and daggers encoiled by tendrils,

3) more organization is perceptible within this group, perfect circles and spheres floating in space, and

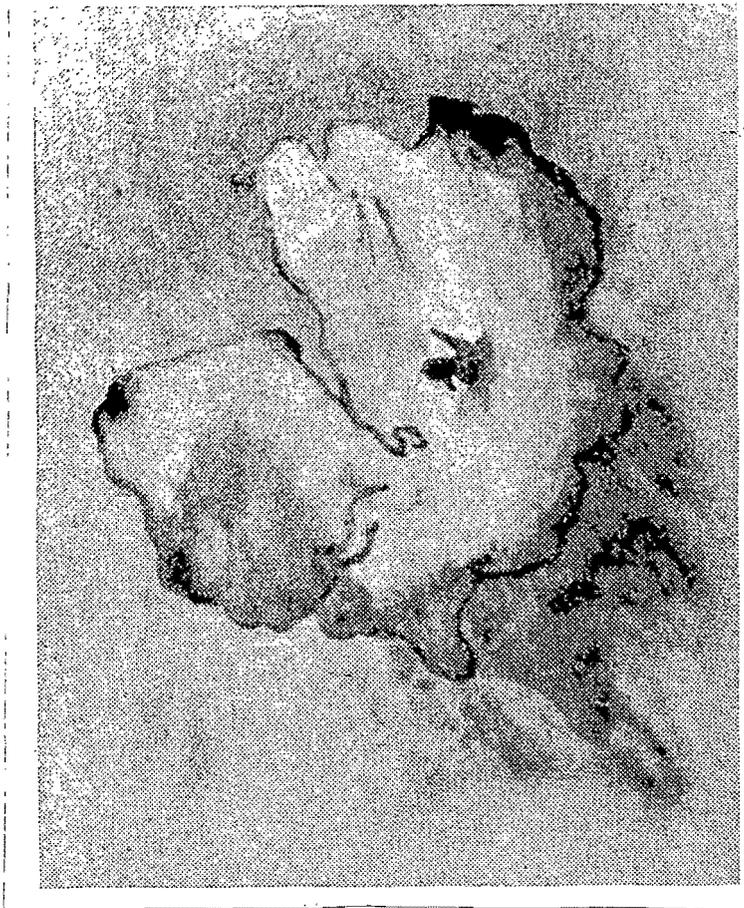
4) the circle and sphere that is isolated.<sup>72</sup>

The form of the painting seems to be of the first type (as shown in photo II) amoeba-like in shape with projections of a not too determined shape. Also this form has the other particulars of form 1 as Read describes as "patches of small and closely associated cells, like frog-spawn."<sup>73</sup> These patches are seen across the top of the painting.

While seeing the painting as a whole, we can see no obvious meaning to the painting. Just as the manifest dream is often absurd and unintelligible--so is this picture. Therefore, to find the true meaning of the painting we must delve into the latent-dream thought of the painting.

The painting has been divided into various sections- A, B, C, D, horizontally and 1,2,3,4,5,6, vertically- for the convenience of locating different objects in the painting. Dali gives us direction in seeing the latent-dream thought. In this painting "the exultation of the libidinal force", he said, "is here related to the feeling of death."<sup>75</sup> As was mentioned above the libido is the name given to the total of the instinctual energies and desires which are derived from the 'id.' We can, therefore, expect to find many different desires expressed as those of a child-woman as related to the feeling of death.

Phbto II 74.



We shall first see in what way death is symbolized in the painting. As we mentioned in the section on symbolism the symbol for death is the same as those in Literature -- that is: skulls, skeletons, ideas of a journey, decay, and the like. In section D-6 there is the skeleton, one of the prime symbols for death. The ruins (C-6) and the corruption of the form (A, B-1,2) show the signs for death and of decay. The ideas of taking a journey is symbolized in the large bird's head (B-1), the two moths (C-2) and in the flying horse (B-5). There is the dream mechanism of condensation -- the combining of two or more thoughts into one -- used in the automobile, (B-6). Besides the use of the idea of taking a journey, which the auto indicates, Dali has liquid running out of the side of the auto, as if it were running out of gas too.

Far in the background<sup>n</sup> are two standing figures (D-5), these are a direct copy from Millet's famous painting of the Angelus. For Dali this is "not a example of religious humility but of sexual repression."<sup>76</sup> As Freud said in the dream the repressions are liberated, here this idea is demonstrated by the position of the two figures in relation to the rest of the painting. Another symbol for repression in general is seen in the face hidden in a pair of hands (A-1, A-4).

The symbols of the male organ are numerous in the painting. The main symbols named by Freud, the key (D-5), and the knife (A-6) are used. Also symbolizing the male organ are: the pillar (C-3), the elongated shape with the figure of a man in the

top (B,C-5,4), the single hand hanging down (B-4), the hand holding the smoking cigarette (B-3), and the tall column in the background. (D-4)

The dream is that of a child-woman, so we would expect many representations of the female. The direct use of the woman's form (A,B-3), the maturing girl (A-4,5,) the Mona Lisa (C-4) -- a symbol of virginity, and the woman's face (B-4, C-1) need not be symbolized for they pass freely from the unconscious. The other ideas for the female are used in connection with the male or the symbol of death, and as a result, are symbolized. The piece of wood (A-6), the corrupting slipper (A-6), the holes in the form (D-4, C-5) and the circle (C-6) all symbolize the female.

The desire for sexual relations is symbolized by the knife sticking in the piece of wood (A-6), the stairs leading up to the pillar and the circle (C-6), the keys in the holes (D-5), and the attacking wild animals (D-1). The sexual passions being aroused is symbolized with the face changing from a man into an animal (A, B-1,2).

The child (D-5) is shown standing dwarfed by the hugeness of everything about, an inferiority complex is manifest here. The desire for having a child is symbolized by the ants in the hole (D-4) and also by the exposed breast for nursing, (A-5).

Another complex symbolized is the Castration complex. For Dali the William Tell legend "is an example of incestuous mutilation".<sup>77</sup> This legend can be seen symbolized in the top

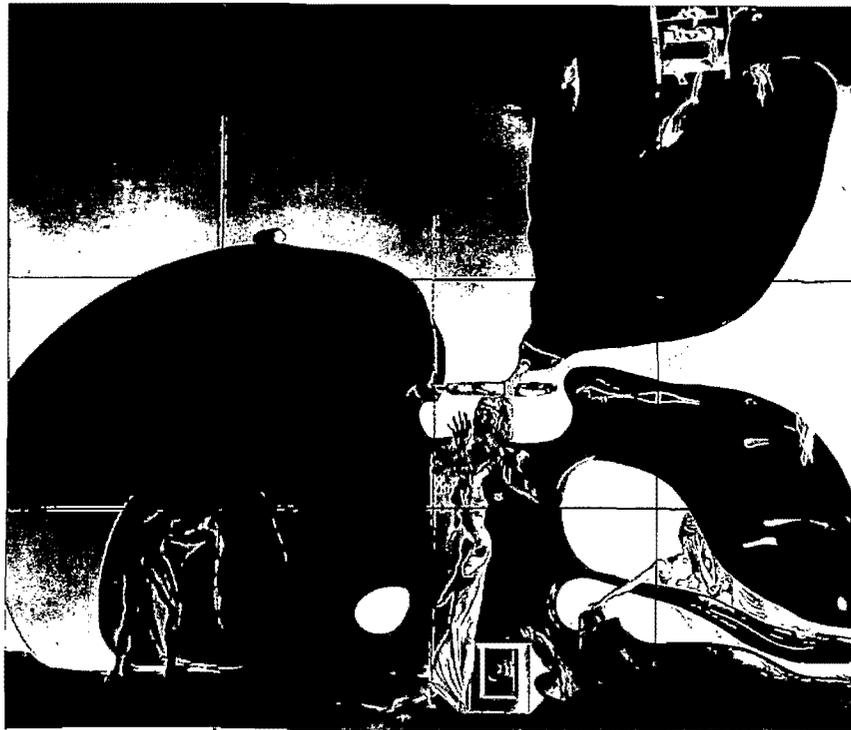
of the painting with the head that has the rock on top (C-1). Freud said that "as insurance against castration, the dreamer uses one of the common symbols of the penis in double or multiple form"<sup>78</sup>. The same is true in the case of a woman. This would explain the many multiple uses for the symbols for the different sexual organs.

The second picture we want to consider is Birth of Liquid Desires, (photo III) which Dali painted in 1932. As the title indicates this dreamphoto is concerned with the ideas of birth and liquid desires. By liquid we could gather from the symbol for the male organ-running water, waterfalls and the like (the idea of the seminal flow), that such ideas of desire for sexual relations will be symbolized.

First, we shall point out, as was done with the first painting, the form of the main masses in relation to the experiments of Read and Jung. The larger form seems to be a progression to a more definite shape than the form of the first painting, but not having all the particulars of the form number two of Read. In photo IV we see an example of a progression of form number one, but more than the form of the painting. There is definite relation of the shape of photo IV and the form in the painting. In the painting we can see in section C-2 "definite enclosed womb-like forms"<sup>79</sup>. So too, we can say that Dali in this painting is using a pattern image of the unconscious.

The title of the painting gives us the first symbols to

Photo III



A

B

C

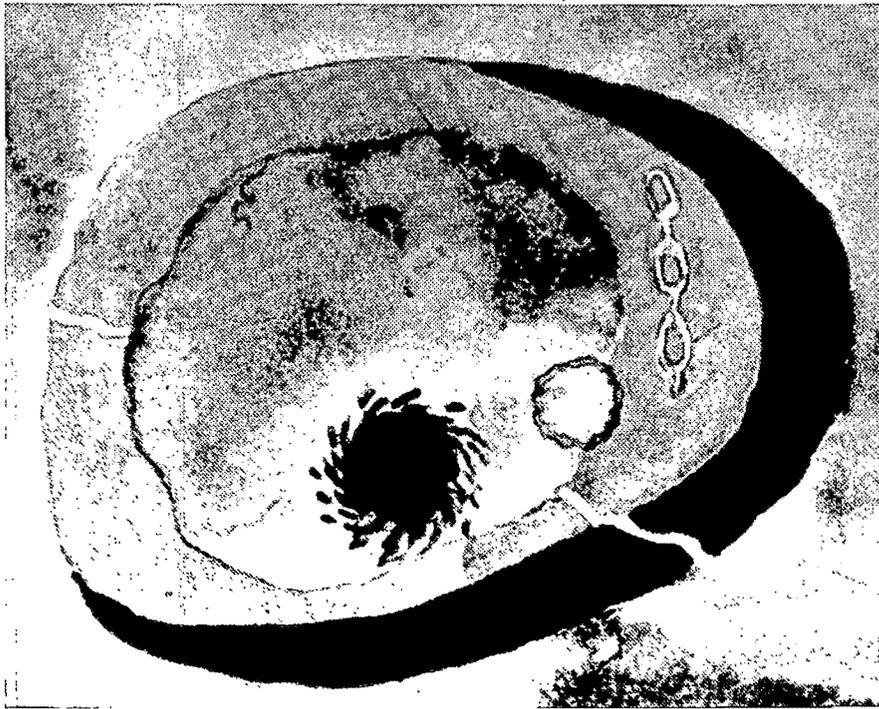
D

1

2

3

Photo IV



find-- those of birth. The most predominant symbol of birth is the floating cabinet (D-1), which is a main Freudian symbol for the female, that has the drawers open and little pieces of cloth falling out. Another symbol of birth in the painting is found in section C-3. Here we see a liquid (symbol of the male) being poured into a bowl (symbol of the female) and out of the bowl a man takes root. The man is holding a woman and both figures' heads are covered with small insects (symbol of children). In these figures coming from the bowl symbolized the birth of the desire of union and of children. The idea of birth is also symbolized in the box (C-3), which is under the man, that has a small form within it.

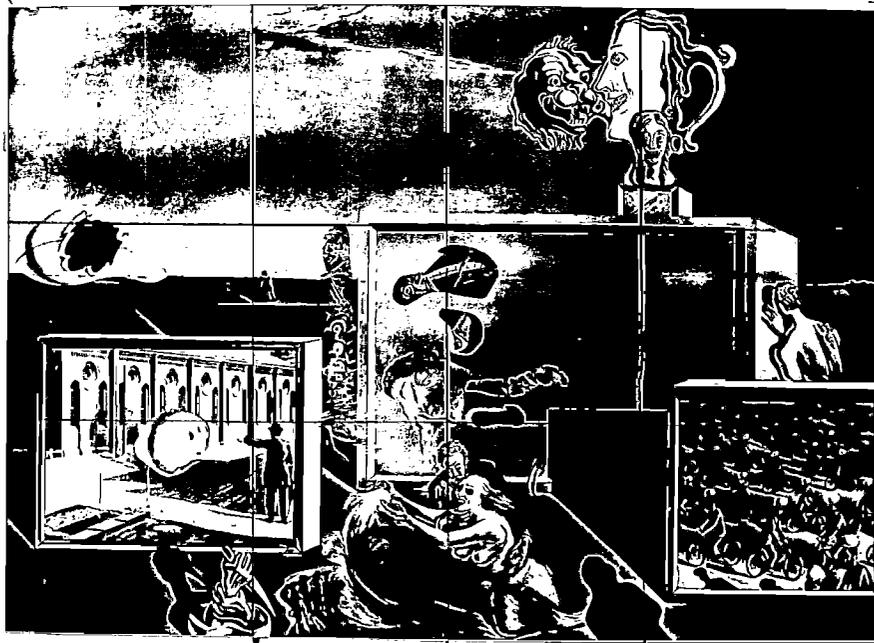
To have this birth a union is necessary. The large form with its "womb-like form"<sup>80</sup> in section C-2, and other opening (A-3, B-3, D-2) symbolize the female. The hanging form (C, D-1, 2) which comes into the larger form symbolize this union between man and woman. In section A-3 we see a man going into the cave-like opening of the form, also symbolizing this union.

A complex is present here too, Again the William Tell legend is symbolized in section B-1: for Dali the fear of castration.

The repression of the whole thought of sexual union is seen in the position of the woman hiding her face (D-3). She is behind the main forms of the picture, but yet reaching out -- desiring this birth of liquid desires.

The third painting Illumined Pleasures (photo V) Dali painted when he was most taken up by the new Surrealistic Move-

photo v



1

2

3

A

B

C

D

ment in 1929. Morse in his book Dali - a study of his life and work says that this painting is the "most complex of Dali's work...it is the prime visual statement of all the irrational and Freudian sentiment which the movement was not able to express in their various dictums, manifestos, and declarations." <sup>82</sup> However, Dali gives us a more definite explanation of the painting. He says of it: "The leonine characterization of the father and the anguish of the mother indicate that sex is the foremost of fundamental motivations." <sup>82</sup> With these thoughts in mind we can proceed to analyse the painting.

The three boxes in the painting represent two symbols condensed in one. First, as boxes they symbolize the male--that is because of the number and the size, one being larger than the other two; and secondly they symbolize the female, that is as boxes. In the box on the left (A-3) is seen a church, which is also a female symbol. The egg-shaped object by the side of the church is one stage of a series of shapes used in Accommodations of Desire (1929). In this latter painting Dali has the light area in the shape develop by stages into a head of a lion. In doing so Dali began "to develop his ideas of a photographic super-reality." <sup>83</sup> The lion, of course, represents the male. The man looking at the Church symbolizes the desire of man to be with woman. The large box (B,C-2) has various openings in the openings in the side, again symbolizing the female. In one opening can be seen a grasshopper. This is a symbol of Dali still within his mother's womb. As we have seen above Dali

calls himself a grasshopper-child. In the other two openings are a shell and little pieces of matter: these symbolize Dali's brothers and sisters. The third box (D-3) stresses the union of man and woman. The William Tell legend is symbolized by each man having a rock on his head; the castration complex for Dali. And as Freud said the dreamer to make up for this complex multiplies the symbols for the sexual organs. For each symbol for the complex is a symbol for sexual union between man and woman, as Freud said riding symbolized this.

In section A-3 is seen a repression of the sexual drive of man. The knife, a main male symbol for Freud, is being held back. To the very right of this hand are waves beating up on shore (B-3). Here the repression is released and union is had: the water symbolizing the male and the shore the female. Again this repression is repeated by the woman trying to run from the man (C-3) and the repression is fulfilled by the shadow (C-3) of two figures together. This union is also symbolized by the man against the box in section D-2.

On top of the large box is a woman's head in the form of a pitcher, which is a main Freudian female symbol. Within this large head is contained a smaller head, that of a child; thus symbolizing birth. The woman's head is being attacked by a lion (man), symbolizing this desire for union. The idea of birth is repeated in the pear shaped object (A-3) with a form seen in the opening. The desire for union is also repeated by

by the two joined figures in sections-B-2.

Certainly after examining the symbolism in this painting we can admit that Dali did fulfill his objective in indicating that sex is a foremost motivation in man.

### Conclusion

Although at first sight the photos of the paintings contained within this paper seem to be ridiculous and non-intelligible, we have found this to be false. With a understanding of Freud's theories of the human mind, we can appreciate such art, if not from the view point of art, as such, then from the view point of Philosophy--a new view in the study of being.

We have seen that there is not only the conscious aspect of our mind, but also an area called by Freud the unconscious. This area, as Freud has proved, reveals itself while the mind is in certain states. It is then that repressions, complexes, and desires manifest themselves in various mechanisms. Freud in his interpretation of these mechanisms has opened another aspect for the study of being.

In this new aspect of being opposites are made one, impossibles made possible, and reality made super-reality---a Surrealism. Looking back on the paintings within this paper, we can now see the foundation which Dali and other surrealist used as their basis, namely; the work of Sigmund Freud. By this small study it is our hope that, not only the one who has made this study, but those that read this paper will come to a understanding of a new aspect of being, which is found in the unconscious mind, through the medium of Art.

### Footnotes

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24. Morton Levitt, op.cit., p. 104.
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31. Ibid., p. 105.
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33. Morton Levitt, op.cit., p. 104.
34. John Cavanagh and James McGoldrick, op.cit., p. 79.
35. Ibid., p. 79.
36. Morton Levitt, op.cit., p. 105.
37. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Editor), Great Books of the Western World, (Chicago, 1955), p. 37.
38. Melvyn Rader, A Modern Book of Esthetics, (New York, 1953), pp. 143-144.
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40. William Fleming, Arts and Ideas, (New York, 1955), p. 722.
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42. Ibid., p. 724.

43. Maurice Raynal, Jacques Lassaigne, Wener Schmalenbach, Arnold Rudlinger, Hans Bolliger, History of Modern Painting From Picasso to Surrealism, (Geneva, 1949), pp. 176-177.
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50. Herbert Read, op.cit., p. 53.
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55. Ibid., p. 113.
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58. Wallace Fowlie, op.cit., p. 106.
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66. Reynolds A. Morse, Dali-a study of his life and work, (New York, 1958), all names of paintings which follow in this paper have been taken from this book unless otherwise indicated.
67. Ibid., p; 63.
68. Ibid., p. 37.
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72. Ibid., p. 187.
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74. Ibid., p. 184.
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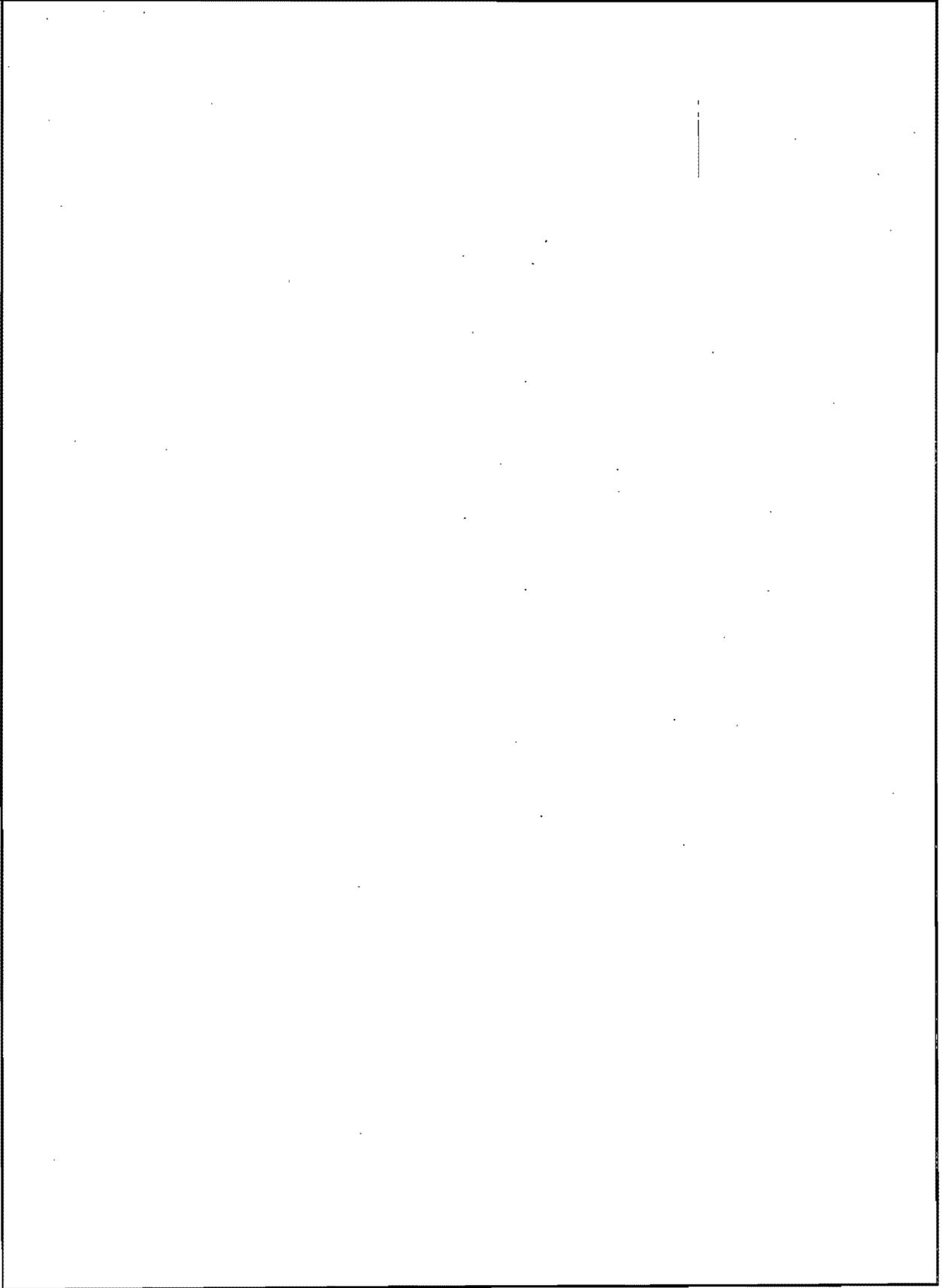
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