Salvador Dali: A psychological case study with
an emphasis on Freud's psychoanalytic theory

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Abstract

The following paper examines the life and artwork of the great Surrealist Artist, Salvador Dali. Many who view his artwork believe that it could only be created by a man who was severely disturbed. Through analysis of his life and the things that influenced him, a psychological examination is conducted which suggests that Dali may have in fact had a number of the problems defined by Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, for example, an Oedipal Complex.

However, through clinical diagnosis using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, it is suggested that the major criteria for the disorder of Narcissistic Personality Disorder are also easily applied to his life, which may go much further in explaining his eccentric behavior and odd sense of self.
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Salvador Dali, though not the founder of Surrealism is one of the most recognizable artists of the genre. His artwork is easily discernable due to its unique style and provocative subject matter. Most recognizable are those pieces he produced during his Surrealist period, which feature strange subject matter ranging from melting clocks to dismembered women (see Appendix C, Pictures 1 and 2). His life, his relationships, his personality, and the body of work he produced all pushed the social envelope. One must wonder, what really drove this “eccentric” artist. Was it perhaps an abnormal psychology? Many psychologists question the relationship between madness and creativity; is Dali another prime example of this correlation? The intent of this paper is to analyze Dali’s life and artwork and utilize a psychoanalytical perspective to answer these questions.

Influences on the Artist

_Dali’s childhood and early career_

An illustrative timeline of Dali’s life can be found in Appendix B. In 1901 in Figueres, Spain a man named Salvador Dali and his wife gave birth to a son. As is the custom, he and his wife named this oldest son after the father. At twenty-one months old, this baby died due to causes that are unclear. Perhaps it was a gastrointestinal infection, meningitis, or the most scandalous possibility—a venereal disease inherited from the father (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Nine months and ten days later on May 1, 1904 Salvador Dali and his wife had a second son. In their grief over the tragedy they had recently faced, they named their second son Salvador as well. This is the Salvador Dali who has become famous in the art world and popular culture. One can imagine that having been named after his deceased brother was an ominous start in life
for this Salvador. His parents talked constantly of his deceased brother and there was a local superstition that said it was bad luck to name one child after another who had died. Consequently, Dali lived with the guilt that he had somehow stolen his brother’s existence ( Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Throughout his childhood, his parents displayed their love and affection for their first son by keeping his picture in prominent locations, referring to him as a genius, and often taking the new Salvador to see his brother’s grave. Like any child, seeing his very own name on a gravestone was frightening for the young Dali. Haunted by this, he developed an alter ego for himself—his brother. Later in life, Salvador would attribute much of his eccentricity to these unusual circumstances, while others believe that his egocentricity was also the result. As a child he had to fight to validate his existence, a behavior that persisted into and throughout adulthood (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

His childhood, however, was not all bad. He was fortunate to be a part of an upper class family in his town with a father who was a local notary and, therefore, a very influential citizen. Dali was just another member in a family with a long lineage of successful individuals. Additionally, a number of his family members were active in the arts, which may have aided in Dali’s interest and ability to enter the art world (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). When Dali was three, his parents had another child—Ana Maria. With Dali’s sister, mother, grandmother, aunt, maids, and a nurse living in the home, women now dominated the household. Dali’s father was distant, and thus the young boy became quite pampered by the women of the house. He often threw tantrums and had childish ailments, which could only be soothed by his mother giving into his wishes, for example, to dress up as a king (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali worshipped his mother, who was always forgiving of his actions. He admired her morals and good behavior, believing that she was always right. Therefore, because she
continued to love him regardless of his bad behavior, Dali concluded that it must actually be good. The novel *Hidden Faces*, which Dali wrote later in life exposes the truly disturbing childhood he experienced, one in which he actually had an unusually sexualized relationship with his mother (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). In the book the main character, Veronica, is female, but represents Dali (Dali, 1944). He writes:

> We sleep together whenever she feels like weeping. This happens about twice a week. She comes running into my bed and makes me put something on; otherwise she would feel shame; then I have to snuggle up to her from behind, hold her tight, and rest my check against the back of her neck to warm it. That makes her sleep. Then immediately I slip out of my pajamas and get rid of them; and if she wakes up in the middle of the night she screams with fright as if my body were a demon’s (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

While Dali adored his mother, he treated his father as his enemy. He attributed his mother’s unhappiness to him. A number of behaviors at home and school were done intentionally to upset his father. He deliberately wet his bed as a child and defecated throughout the house, to further aggravate the situation. This developed into a scatological obsession that would last throughout his life and become apparent in his artwork (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali and his father continued to fight throughout his life as Dali felt overly controlled by him and his father felt he just needed more guidance. Both had incredibly powerful personalities, which perpetuated the conflict. Dali was eccentric and free willed; he was more concerned with art and his own will than reality. This aggravated and frightened his father, a pragmatist, who could not understand him (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Meanwhile, during his childhood Dali was already showing his natural artistic talent. He would concentrate with an unusual fervor on drawings made on tablecloths and other makeshift
canvases. He often incorporated his odd obsessions into his art and behavior. For example, at the age of seven, he became fixated by an image of Napoleon and adopted him as an idol, desiring to be him. When Dali began attending school, it was with much protesting (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). As with home, his time there would involve strange and complicated relationships. He spent a great deal of time with a certain professor, S. D. Esteban Trayter, which some biohistorians speculate may have been more than just a student-teacher relationship (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Dali spent a great deal of time with him, often sitting on his lap. Later, Dali would have an unreasonable fear of being touched; perhaps his interactions with Senor Traytor lead to an aversion towards normal contact. Here, Dali was introduced to a number of unusual items, which the professor collected in a back office. Many of these items such as a mummified frog, medical paraphernalia, and an optical theater can be seen in his surrealist paintings. Some critics believe Dali’s paintings reveal the secrets of his life, more so than his autobiographies (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Even at this age, Dali stood out from his classmates with his flamboyant dress (See Appendix C, Picture 3). This lead to bullying from his classmates, a fact which Dali denied later in life. He had only one friend, Joan Butxaques to whom Dali was sexually attracted. Later, this friend’s clothing inspired Dali’s obsession with pockets and drawers seen in his artwork (See Appendix C, Picture 4). At this age, he spent much of his time daydreaming, so much so, that he began to invent what he later called “false memories”. However, he was actually adept at fantasizing, learning to use it well—an ability that is all too apparent in his artwork (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

After a year at his first school, Dali appeared to have learned nothing, as he was unable to even read or write. So, his father sent him to a new school. However, the situation did not
improve. He could not pay attention in the classroom; instead he reportedly focused for hours on the trees outside the window or objects in the hallway. Later, the images he saw outside those windows would appear in his artwork. Particularly, there was a painting entitled *The Angelus*, which Dali would imitate later in a number of paintings (See Appendix C, Picture 5). His teachers gave him poor marks that year and declared him "mentally lazy" (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Today of course, he might be viewed as an exceptionally gifted child who was bored in the classroom. Unfortunately, that was not the view of the time and he was held back another year as he pretended to not know the basics. His underachievement continued to annoy his father. These battles left their mark on Dali; for example, throughout his life he would use bad handwriting to annoy those he felt to be in authority over him (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

During this time, Dali’s mother continued to allow him to behave however he wanted. This extreme overprotection and permissiveness may have been due in part to the death of her first son. Eventually, as with everything he got exactly what he wanted—in one particular case, a playroom in which to paint. There, he began painting and studying the artwork of others. Even at the age of ten, with his early impressionistic style, he showed an amazing degree of talent (See Appendix C, Picture 6). Two years after getting his "studio", Dali fell ill. Though the cause is unclear, it seemed to stem from psychological rather than physical problems (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). The ailment was quite serious and at the family doctor’s recommendation, he was moved to the country for a time so he could recuperate. He stayed with the family’s lawyer, who was an impressionist artist himself. Here, Dali’s imagination grew and he continued developing as a painter. This time of separation from his family also gave him a bit of independence and provided him an opportunity to learn about himself (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).
After this time away from home, the family lawyer persuaded Dali’s father to get Salvador drawing lessons. Although, Dali ignored his teacher’s advice to “never go beyond the limits,” his teacher (Professor Joan Nunez) did give Dali the foundations needed to be a truly great artist. During this time he also continued to attend the Marist School. His eccentricities became even more pronounced, providing fodder with which his classmates could bully him (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). His most prominent neurosis at that time was a fear of grasshoppers, which was so intense, it lead to his teachers’ forbidding anything related to grasshoppers including even the mention of them by the other students (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali continued to do the bare minimum in school only because if he did not, his parents would not allow him to spend his summers in Cadaques. It was here, that Dali’s adolescence began. Entering into puberty increased Dali’s tendency toward rebellion. He grew his hair out, and began to use makeup stolen from his mother in an attempt to imitate Renaissance artist Raphael (See Appendix C, Picture 7). Even more shocking, he began to masturbate regularly and reported growing pathologically fond of himself. He was quoted as saying; “I espied my first pubic hairs and found expression for my narcissistic desires among the rocks at Cape de Creus. I ecstatically sowed my seed as I masturbated along the coves, creating a sort of erotic Mass between the earth and my body” (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). His parents seem to have done little to counteract their son’s increasing eccentricities, putting very few restraints on his behavior. They may have developed a helpless attitude about it from unsuccessfully struggling with an odd son who acted both timid and violently aggressive at times. Dali reportedly enjoyed being the subject of this controversy. He began to believe anything abnormal that happened was attributed to him and delighted in his own uniqueness and solitude. His style of painting also
took a different direction during his adolescence as he moved from impressionism to cubism (See Appendix C, Picture 8) (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Just after World War I, Dali turned fifteen and his behavior became so disruptive that he was expelled from the Marist School. However, since he had passed his exams he was able to attend the senior educational establishment in his town. In January 1919, he had his first art show, receiving promising reviews (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). At this time, Dali busied himself in his studio near the family apartment, where he painted portraits of the local Gypsies. At age 16, he began writing, often about his own endeavors. Because both writing and painting were such important aspects of his creative life, many of Dali's paintings are infused with a literary quality. One painting in particular that he created during his well-known surrealist period, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (See Appendix C, Picture 9), even had a poem to go along with it (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali also worked with friends at school to produce a magazine and a newspaper, which featured some of his own poems and artwork. He kept diaries at the time that reflected a wide variety of personal information such as his daily activities, his views on politics, and the importance he placed on color in artwork (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Later, when these diaries were published, Dali would be outraged because of the more realistic image they portrayed of him; in contrast to the grandiose image he attempted to depict in his own autobiographies:

Most human beings seemed like wretched wood lice to me, crawling about in terror, unable to live their lives with courage enough to assert themselves. I deliberately decided to emphasize all aspects of my personality and exaggerate all the contradictions that set me that much more apart from common mortals. Especially, to have no dealings with the dwarfs, the runts that were all around me, to change no whit of my personality, but on the
contrary to impose my view of things, my behavior, the whole of my individuality on everyone else. I have never deviated from this line of conduct (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Yet, this self-confidence seems to perhaps have been nothing more than an armor Dali “wore” in order to protect himself. Dali allowed few people to see his true self. One person who seemed to know his true nature was his mother, who died on February 6, 1921. Dali, who was still incredibly dependent on his mother, was so devastated by her death that he was unable to speak of her again until his thirties (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). This also further complicated the family dynamics, which had already been strained due to the affair Dali’s father had been having with his aunt for some time. Dali’s artwork during this time reflects his awareness of this familial dysfunction. Nevertheless, in 1921, Dali graduated from the Instituto General UTC Tecnico with high marks (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali’s sister, Ana Maria who was at that time thirteen, seems to have replaced his mother’s role in his life. They grew very close and most likely had an incestuous relationship. She also became his only female model until he married his wife, Gala. Much later as a result of the relationship between the siblings, Dali’s wife (Gala) and Ana Maria had a conflictual and even violent relationship (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). His sexual relationship with his sister probably ended in 1925 when Dali moved to Madrid (a move first initiated in 1921, when he traveled to Madrid to take entrance exams for a school). A compromise had been reached between Dali and his father that he would attend this school and learn not only the skills necessary to paint, but also to teach art. In his autobiography he tells the story of his examination to enter the school. It becomes similar to a classical myth, with him as the conquering hero in the end. This event in his life, like so many others became a truth that Dali
would twist and dramatize to suit his own purpose—to build himself up and draw attention to
himself (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

While enrolled in school at Madrid, Dali lived in the Residencia de Estudiantes. Again, he set
himself apart with his extravagant dress, which he used to hide his timid personality.
Here, he was introduced to a wealth of knowledge and emerging ideas, including Freud’s new
theories on interpreting dreams and the unconscious. Meanwhile, back home his grandmother
passed away. During his first year at the Residencia, Dali had roommate problems due to their
very different personalities (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). He also was very disappointed by the
school, where he felt like he would learn nothing. He later said he was dismayed by the lack of
“limits, rigor, science,” he felt that instead, “[he] was offered liberty, laziness, approximations!”
He had hoped to learn technique, but with a lack of guidance, he continued to invent his “own
world” (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

However, his letters home conveyed enthusiasm for the school and an involvement in
activities that did not truly exist. Still, he did attend every class and was a “good” pupil. His
professors felt he was too intellectual and not a born artist. He developed a friendship with an
older classmate, who apparently became his “partner in crime” (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).
Together they pulled a number of pranks. The other students also took advantage of Dali’s
naivety, who was unable to even shop for himself. However, he soon found a group of friends
when his peers discovered his artwork. He began dressing like his friends by cutting his hair and
becoming a “dandy” (See Appendix C, Picture 10). The hairstyle he developed and manner of
dress he adopted would stay with him until the 1960’s when he would adopt the then current
“hippie” style. He developed a strange relationship with a fellow student named Garcia Lorca,
who was prominent in his group of friends. Between 1922 and 1925, Dali and this close group
of three friends spent much time together, forming a group within the larger group they socialized with. Together, they created their own system of symbols and words that later influenced Dali's film, *Un Chien Andalou*, and his personal iconography, which he later used in his artwork (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

In 1923, during Dali's second year at the school, his style of painting changed from cubism to purism (See Appendix C, Picture 12), though he was less unsuccessful with it. Later that year, he was suspended from school for participating in a riot. He was sent home, where he was put in jail for some time. He spent the following summer in Cadaques again, where he continued painting with his sister as his model. His father also purchased him a printing press, allowing him to create illustrations for a book that was published the following year. He reportedly enjoyed his new freedom and looked forward to returning to Madrid (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

That fall, Dali returned to Madrid and the Residencia, though he would not be allowed to reenroll in his art school for another year. He spent his time with friends but also worked on his art a great deal. He took classes at the nearby free art school. He practiced drawing nudes and doing portraits—often using his friends as his subjects. Dali also spent a great deal of time reading, becoming especially interested in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). The theories, Dali's childhood memories, and visits he made to the crypt of Prado with friends began to combine in his mind to form his paranoiac-critical method, which would emerge when he entered the surrealist movement. Meanwhile, back at home Dali's father married his aunt while Dali continued to be fascinated by his younger sister—a fact apparent in his artwork. At the same time though, his relationship with his friend Lorca was deepening into
something that may have been more than friendship as both boys were reportedly very attracted to one another (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

The following summer, Lorca accompanied Dali on his vacation to Cadaques (See Appendix C, Picture 13). There, they spent much time together, however, a relationship also began to develop between Lorca and Dali’s sister. Soon, Lorca became Dali’s chief model, replacing his sister. It is unclear whether Dali was aware of Lorca’s attraction and whether or not he intentionally provoked it (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). They spent a great deal of time together throughout that summer and the following fall Lorca wrote an ode to Dali that was published. The next year Dali would remain in Figueres and Cadaques working on paintings for his first one-man show. While he and Lorca exchanged letters, Dali would always put his art first (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali’s first individual art showing featured a new style (See Appendix C, Picture 14), as he had turned away from cubism and purism. In the catalog for the show, Dali’s attitude during this period towards painting can be seen through a quote he included from art historian Elie Faure, who said, “A great painter only has the right to take up tradition again after he has gone through a revolution, which is only the search for his own reality” (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Dali like Picasso and Matisse in Paris were returning to the idea of the classical form, drawing from the style and themes of the “golden mythical age”. Dali’s show was met with enthusiasm from the critics and thus can be interpreted as a success. As a result, his father sent him to Paris with his aunt and sister. There, he met Picasso and visited the Lourve (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

The following fall, Dali was able to return to Madrid, the Residencia, and his art school. His group of friends, however, was no longer there. He would not see Lorca until the following May. At this time, Dali began to plan for a permanent life in Paris. He purposely got himself
expelled from school because he had grown so dissatisfied with the prospects it afforded him.

He returned home, to a very unhappy father (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). Dali was now twenty-two and working towards his second one-man show, where he would once again exhibit a new style (See Appendix C, Picture 15). The following three years, between Dali’s expulsion from school and his move to Paris have become known as “the Lorca years” or “the lost years”. However, these were a critical time in his development as an artist because it marked his transition to Surrealism (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

**Surrealism**

Founded by artist Andre Breton, the surrealist art movement developed in 1924 as a reaction against the destruction he believed had occurred from rationalism, European culture, politics, and WWI (Descharnes, 1998; Pioch, 2002). It originated with the Dada movement in Paris but soon spread throughout Europe and into North America, Japan, the Caribbean, and eventually Africa, South America, Asia, and Australia (Wikipedia, 2006). Surrealists believed that irrational thought and dream-like states were the remedy to problems caused by the industrial revolution and the rational mind (Wikipedia, 2006). Breton drew heavily on theories adapted from Marx, Freud, and others when he published “The Surrealist Manifesto” (Pioch, 2002; Wikipedia, 2006). In this, he defined surrealism as “Thought expressed in the absence of any control exerted by reason, and outside all moral and aesthetic considerations” (Dempsey, 2002). Surrealism began as a literary movement, but soon began to focus on the visual arts (Urton, 2005). However, it was not just a creative movement, it also sought to effect political and social change. Their most radical goal was to revolutionize all aspects of the human experience in order to free people from “false rationality”. Of course, not all members of the
surrealist movement were interested in politics and it is no wonder that most people remember it for its artwork and interesting artists (Wikipedia, 2006).

Surrealist artwork is best characterized by fantastical visual imagery from the subconscious mind used with no intentions of making the works logically comprehensible (Descharnes, 1998). The name of the art movement itself means "above reality" and the artists chose this name believing that our subconscious minds may contain an element of truth that should super-cede the reality of everyday consciousness (Urton, 2005; Dempsey, 2002). Therefore, there is a large focus on psychological states such as dreams and reality, which is reflected in the artwork (Urton, 2005). Both the movement and the artwork were deeply impacted by the psychoanalytic work of Jung and Freud; their analysis of the symbols of dreams was particularly influential (Descharnes, 1998). Viewing the unconscious as a source of unused creative ideas, the surrealists hoped to express them through art (Urton, 2005). Ultimately, they sought to use their artwork to liberate the unconscious and reconcile it with the conscious in order to free mankind from the shackles of logic and reason, which they viewed as the cause of war and domination (Dempsey, 2002). Through their views, Surrealists supported and embraced "idiosyncrasy" and did not view it as due to any underlying darkness or madness. Instead they utilized it to create their artwork. Dali himself said, “The only difference between myself and a madman is I am not MAD! (Wikipedia, 2006)”

Many of the surrealist works depicted strange and disturbing subject matter, which ranged from photographs of dismembered dolls to sexually ambiguous paintings that could represent either males or female, so they could prompt thoughts about procreation and castration. The artists worked in a variety of media such as sculpture, rubbings, collage, and of course painting. Artwork from the movement can be divided into two branches. One sought to create
realistic representations of dreamlike states, while the other preferred an abstract style (Urton, 2005). Dali became one of the masters of the representational style and no doubt, the most famous individual from the entire surrealist movement. Many of his paintings can stand alone as representations of what the surrealist movement idealized. Most notably among these are the easily recognized *The Persistence of Memory* and the lesser known *Sleep* (See Appendix C, Picture 1 and 16). To create his surrealist artwork, Dali drew on themes that had been used throughout the history of art, including many references to religious and mythical figures. Many of his paintings from this time period also include hidden images and illusions, such as in the elaborate and complicated *The Hallucinogenic Torreador* (See Appendix C, Picture 17). He had the ability to work in a variety of media and make strange associations, which Dali called, “a spontaneous method of irrational knowledge” (Urton, 2005).

Though, the surrealist movement began with the writings of Andre Breton, it was most likely Luis Bunuel, who brought Dali into the style. Dali, who was also influenced artistically by Picasso, was later influenced by Luis Bunuel, when he began working together. Dali began working with Bunuel in 1927, after he was expelled from school. Together, they created the film, *Un Chien Andalou*, which was created according to one rule—that all subject matter presented in the film must have no rational or psychological explanation. At the time, artistically, Dali was a bit lost and had no distinct style for his artwork. However, with Bunuel’s mentoring and interest in the surrealist movement, Dali’s curiosity was sparked and he began to explore the style (BBC, 2001).

Dali first became a member of the movement after the group took notice of him in the summer of 1929. The film he had created in collaboration with Bunuel, *Un Chien Andalou* caught their attention due to the high degree of violence and cruelty. Enthusiastic about him,
Magritte, Goemans, Eluard, and Gala went to meet Dali in Cadaques. This was not only a pivotal moment in Dali’s artistic career but in his personal life as well. It was then, that Dali met his future wife Gala (See Appendix C, Picture 18). At the time, she was Eluard’s wife, however she would eventually leave him for Dali. Salvador completed his burst onto the art scene and into the surrealism movement with his first Parisian exhibition in late 1929. His paintings at this exhibition showed that it was important to seek out mysterious, imaginary imagery and find a place for them in reality through artwork (Wikipedia, 2006).

Dali continued to be an active influence in the rapid establishment of the visual style of surrealism between 1930 and 1935. He helped surrealism to find a method—exposing “psychological truth by stripping ordinary objects of their normal significance, in order to create a compelling image that was beyond ordinary formal organization, in order to evoke empathy from the viewer” (See Appendix C, Picture 19) (Wikipedia, 2006). It was around this time that Dali published an article entitled “The Rotten Donkey” in which he outlined his paranoiac-critical theory that had started to develop much earlier. The article explained his desire to help discredit reality by adding “a process which is paranoiac and active in nature” to the passive states of the mind. He believed that paranoia was a superior mental state because it has the ability to take possession of the outside world and to interpret it according to an obsessive idea. He felt that paranoiac activity could have a large impact on the way in which one conceives and perceives reality. According to artistic scholars, this new paranoiac-critical theories left Dali in a place where normality and pathology crossed paths (Durozoi, 2002).

Dali began to use more obsessions in his artwork, fusing the “scatological and the exalted,” Eros and Thanatos, depicting intense detail and wide panoramas. His paintings from this era offer interpretation and surprise. Works such as the Evocation of Lenin (See Appendix,
Picture 20) and *The old age of William Tell* (See Appendix C, Picture 21) are laden with double meaning, juxtaposed symbols, incongruous details, alterations of relative proportion, and obvious autobiographical elements. Then, in 1931 Dali reached a particularly important year when he began to use liquid shapes such as in his most famous work—*The Persistence of Memory* which features melting clocks (See Appendix C, Picture 1) (Durozoi, 2002). For Dali, the limp watches represented “nothing other than the paranoiac-critical camembert—tender, extravagant, and solitary—of time and space.” (Durozoi, 2002)

Gradually, Dali’s artwork became synonymous (for the public) with surrealism. However, with the start of WWII, Dali began to experience a rift between him and the rest of the surrealist group, particularly Breton. This was due in part to his political beliefs and amoral attitude. Reportedly, the group also disagreed with his paranoiac-critical method, preferring automatism. Additionally, they disliked him using his art for commercial purposes and nicknamed him “Avida Dollars”, which is an anagram for Salvador Dali. Dali tried to claim he chose to move on to a more “classic” period, however, Breton did excommunicate Dali from the surrealist movement. This was first attempted at a general assembly held at Breton’s house on February 5, 1934. Dali actually escaped that day by pretending to be sick and writing off his interest in Hitler as apolitical, however relations between him and the other surrealists did not improve and eventually became an open conflict. Additionally, he was beginning to entrust himself and his career more to his wife and muse, Gala (Durozoi, 2002). Eventually, in 1939 he was officially expelled from the surrealist movement (Descharnes, 1998).

Even after his departure from the surrealist movement, Dali continued to produce surrealist style art and to use the themes he had begun to focus on in the 1930s. He reportedly claimed that, “The only difference between the surrealists and me is that I am a surrealist”
Dali was one of several artists to be expelled from the surrealist movement and many followed his artistic path rather than Breton’s (Wikipedia, 2006). However, Andre Breton and Dali himself were not the only people to have a strong influence on surrealism; they, and the other surrealists were of course strongly influenced by Sigmund Freud and his psychoanalytic theory.

*The Psychoanalytic Theories of Freud*

Today, theories from the psychoanalytic perspective are taught widely in psychology courses. Psychologists and laymen alike have heard of Sigmund Freud and the theories he wrote about in his numerous books. Today, these theories are no longer given much credence though many of the techniques he developed are still utilized by therapists (Schultz, 2004). During Dali’s time, however, the theories posed by psychoanalysis, particularly those of Freud were quite new and shocking. Dali and the other surrealists took notice of psychoanalytic theory and it had a great influence on their movement and the artwork they produced (Schultz, 2004). In fact, although the Surrealist movement was artistically linked to the Dada movement, Sigmund Freud was perhaps the most important intellectual influence on the Surrealists as a whole (Dempsey, 2002).

As with most theories, the psychoanalytic movement was influenced by other contemporary ideas. Darwin’s writings on evolution were one major influence on Freud’s theories; suggesting that biological forces such as love and hunger drive humans. Freud believed that people have an unconscious, which houses all the information we cannot currently handle (Schultz, 2004). As part of this unconscious, he believed there are two main instincts—the instinct to gratify oneself sexually (Eros) and the instinct to act aggressively (Thanatos). He proposed that we also have three personality structures, which seek to gratify, control, or mediate
Those instincts. He named these structures the id, ego, and superego. The id is the structure, which seeks gratification, while the superego contains morals and encourages good behavior. The ego must mediate between these two structures and choose the behavior that people will engage in (Schultz, 2004).

Another major area of Freud’s theory is the psychosexual stages of development. Freud believed that neurotic disturbances originated in childhood experiences. He emphasized childhood development and felt that adult personality was completely formed by the age of five. Throughout the developmental process, however, children pass through five psychosexual stages (Schultz, 2004). Each of these stages centers on one specific “erogenous” zone, which Freud believed children derive pleasure from either through self-stimulation or stimulation provided by a caregiver. Freud also believed that during any one of these stages, children could receive either too much or too little satisfaction, which could result in a fixation or a personality type centered on the activities associated with that stage. Freud’s psychosexual stages and his other theories were based on patients he saw as well as his own childhood experiences (Schultz, 2004).

The first stage, which lasts from birth to the second year of life, is known as the oral stage. During this stage, children learn and get pleasure from stimulation of the mouth through activities such as sucking, biting, and swallowing. Becoming fixated in this stage could result in a person preoccupied with mouth habits such as smoking, kissing, and eating (Schultz, 2004). He also felt that other adult behaviors such as excessive optimism, sarcasm, or cynicism could also be caused by significant events in the oral stage of development. The second stage of psychosexual development is the anal stage. In this stage, gratification shifts from the mouth to the anus and pleasure is derived from the anal area of the body, as children are toilet trained. Children learn to expel or withhold feces according to their parents’ wishes. A fixation during
this time can result in an anal-expulsive adult who is dirty, wasteful, or extravagant; or it can result in an anal-retentive adult who may be excessively neat, clean, and compulsive (Schultz, 2004).

Around the fourth year of life, children enter the phallic stage. They begin to experience erotic satisfaction from sexual fantasies, fondling, and exhibition of the genitals. Freud believed that the Oedipus/Electra complex often characterizes this stage. Named after the Greek legend, this complex involves a child becoming sexually attracted to the parent of the opposite sex (Schultz, 2004). This results in fear and resentment towards the parent of the same sex who is viewed as a rival because they have the attention and affection of the opposite sex parent. Freud believed that children eventually overcome this complex by identifying with the parent of the same sex. Additionally, they will replace their sexual longing for the opposite sex parent with more socially acceptable kinds of affection. The attitudes that are developed during this time will affect adult relationships with members of the opposite sex. Meanwhile the child will also adopt moral standards held by the same sex parent, which will affect his/her superego (Schultz, 2004).

After the trials of the first three stages of psychosexual development, Freud believed that children entered a period of latency from the ages of 5-12. Then, as adolescence begins, children enter the genital stage. During this time, heterosexual behavior becomes more important and the child begins to prepare for marriage and eventually parenthood. Freud believed that at this point, their psychosexual development is complete, though; any problems they may have experienced during it will most likely affect their mental health the rest of their lives (Schultz, 2004).

Freud developed and applied his theories through his work with patients. As a result, much of it revolves around the neuroses he saw in his patients. While some of them were caused
by fixations in various psychosexual stages, he believed others had problems with anxiety.

Freud believed there are three major types of anxiety. One, objective anxiety can be caused by fears of actual dangers in the real world (Schultz, 2004). The others, neurotic and moral anxiety, are derived from objective anxiety. Neurotic anxiety is caused by the recognition of potential dangers inherent in gratifying the instincts of the id and the possible punishment that one could incur. Meanwhile, moral anxiety is caused by one's conscience and the guilt or shame felt when thinking of or performing an action contrary to one's moral values. Logically, moral anxiety would be directly influenced by how well developed one's conscience (superego) is (Schultz, 2004).

Another major area of Freud's theory is the set of defense mechanisms, which he believed we unconsciously use to protect ourselves from the damaging experiences of the anxieties that one may feel. There are a number of defense mechanisms including: denial, displacement, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, repression, and sublimation. A significant one, which pertains well to Dali and many other artists, is sublimation, which suggests that in order to alter or displace impulses from the id, people often divert their instinctual and sexual energy into socially acceptable behavior, such as artistically creative endeavors (Schultz, 2004).

The final area that Freud placed major emphasis on in his theories and writing was dreams. Dali read one of his early books, *The Interpretation of Dreams* during his time in college. In the book, Freud describes a number symbols that may appear in dreams and offers interpretation of their meanings. For example, a common dream that people have—being naked in a crowd could indicate a desire to be noticed (Schultz, 2004). Other symbols can be seen in
the artwork produced by Dali and the other surrealist artists; often these are sexual representations (Lambirth, 1998).

Indeed, Salvador Dali had a special fascination with Freud’s writings and theories, which had begun even before he was a part of the surrealist movement when he first began reading Freud’s writings as a student (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). As with many other things Dali was exposed to during life, he quickly utilized Freud theories and adapted them to his own ends (Lambirth, 1998). Not only do components of Freud’s theories appear in Dali’s artwork, but some of his writings resemble those of Freud’s as well. Later in life, Dali would even have the opportunity to meet Freud. This event occurred in London on July 19, 1938 (Lambirth, 1998). At this time, Freud had recently been ransomed by the Nazi’s and was weakened by cancer (History of art encyclopedia, 1998). Many scholars refer to the meeting of the two minds as being less than successful. Dali, who was full of himself and his own abilities to self-interpret, was “far too knowing for the father of psychoanalysis.” Dali believed he had discovered the secret of dreams and the life of the unconscious. Reportedly, Freud told Dali, “In classic paintings, I look for the subconscious; in Surrealist works, I look for the conscious element” (History of art encyclopedia, 1998). Consequently, the two would never have any relationship beyond that of inspiration for Dali. Though, Dali did produce an evocative portrait of the father of psychoanalysis, which is still admired today (See Appendix C, Picture 22 and 23) (Lambirth, 1998).

When looking at surrealist artwork, it is easy to see that the unconscious, dreams, and a number of key Freudian theories are prominent. This is especially true in Dali’s paintings, who both intentionally and unintentionally created art that is easily explained through application of psychoanalytic principles (Schultz, 2004). The surrealists as a whole were particularly interested
in psychoanalytic ideas about castration anxiety, fetishes, and the uncanny. A focus on sex and death can be seen as well (Dempsey, 2002). These subject matter can be seen throughout the surrealist artwork that Dali produced. Therefore, it becomes apparent that like the surrealist movement, Freud and his theories had a great impact on the thought processes of Salvador Dali and consequently, his art (Schultz, 2004).

Political and economic influences

While the psychoanalytic theories proposed by Freud as well as the surrealist movement were rising in Europe, through the 1930s and 40s, there was a much darker influence coming to power—Adolph Hitler. Hitler’s actions had an influence on the writings of Breton and thus the surrealist movement (Wikipedia, 2006). They also had a significant impact on the development of Freud’s theories. Dali himself was in some ways an admirer of Hitler, believing that his rise to power could be a positive disturbance of intellectual certainties. Dali depicted Hitler in several works including, The Enigma of Hitler (See Appendix C, Picture 24). Unfortunately, the Nazis destroyed many of these works. This admiration of Hitler and the expression of it through his artwork was one factor, which lead to Dali’s expulsion from the surrealist movement (Wikipedia, 2006).

The power of Lenin was also influential during this time and Dali depicted him in his painting The Enigma of William Tell (See Appendix C, Picture 25). While the surrealists disliked Hitler, they admired Lenin and supported his political views. Many of Dali’s fellow surrealists saw this painting as a form of ridicule, which further upset them. What may have disturbed the surrealists the most, however, was that Dali wrote a letter to Breton concerning his feelings on Hitler (Ehterinton-Smith, 1992). Dali felt that the surrealists should support Hitler and perhaps try to view him from the surrealist point of view. However, Dali's attraction to
Hitler and Lenin went beyond mere admiration for their politics and social power. He was reportedly obsessed with Adolph Hitler particularly, because of the ‘shape of his back’ (BBC, 2001). Because of the sexual nature of the artwork concerning Hitler, and the statements Dali made, it is easy to suspect that Dali was physically and even sexually attracted to him (BBC, 2001). For example:

I often dreamed of Hitler as a woman. His flesh, which I had imagined whiter than white, ravished me. I painted a Hitlerian wet nurse knitting sitting in a puddle of water. I was forced to take the swastika off her armband. There was no reason for me to stop telling one and all that to me Hitler embodied the perfect image of the great masochist who would unleash a world war solely for your pleasure of losing and burying himself beneath the rubble of an empire: the gratuitous action par excellence that should indeed have warranted the admiration of the surrealists (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Hitler on the other hand, viewed Dali and the surrealists as either insane or criminal because of the subject matter depicted in their paintings (BBC, 2001).

Another obsession, which grew through the course of Salvador Dali’s career, which also deepened the rift between Dali and the surrealists and influenced his adult life, was a lust for money. This grew as he gained in popularity. He became very commercial, had his work featured in film, created fashion, made ads for agencies and did a number of other creative endeavors, which the surrealists disagreed with. They would have preferred he keep his focus on creating artwork just for the sake of creating it. Dali’s wife, Gala, encouraged this lust for money even at the potential loss of his artistic integrity and the respect of the artistic community. He did a number of highly unethical things to help create revenue, such as for example, signing blank sheets of paper in order for other people to paint a picture and then sell it as his work at a
Dali 27

high price. Unfortunately, this procedure has led to a debate over who was responsible for a number of his paintings that do not seem to fit as well with his usual creative style (BBC, 2001).

The childhood Dali experienced, the political climate he grew up in, figures such as Hitler and Lenin who came to power during his lifetime, world events, new theories from the field of psychology, and the surrealist movement all had significant influences on Dali. During his childhood, Dali exhibited a number of eccentricities, because of his unique experiences. These eccentricities would last into his adulthood and shape his relationships, actions, and artwork. Just as much as his artwork, his personal life would be decidedly odd in its own right.

The Artist's Life

A comprehensive timeline of Dali's life can be found in Appendix B.

A relationship forms

In 1929, when Dali met the Surrealist group and joined the movement, this marked a significant point in both his professional life and personal life. Not only was he greeted by the core of the surrealist movement, Rene Magritte, Luis Buneul, and Paul Eluard, it was in this first meeting, that he also met Helena Ivanovna Diakonova, who was known as Gala. During this first meeting she was married to Surrealist artist Paul Eluard. However, Dali reportedly immediately fell in love with her. He believed she was the personification of the woman he had dreamed about during his childhood, whom he had named Galuschka. He reported recognizing her from her back, claiming evidence of this to be visible in most of his paintings and drawings, which display the same physique (Descharnes, 1998). Dali was in love with Gala's body and she soon became his model and muse (See Appendix C, Picture 26). Later in his book The Secret Life of Salvador Dali, he would describe her in the following way:
Her body still had the complexion of a child’s. Her shoulder blades and the sub-renal muscles had that somewhat sudden athletic tension of an adolescent’s. But the small of her back, on the other hand, was extremely feminine and pronounced, and served as an infinitely svelte hyphen between the willful, energetic, and proud leanness of her torso and her very delicate buttocks which the exaggerated slenderness of her waist enhanced and rendered greatly more desirable (Descharnes, 1998).

Dali’s first meeting with Gala ended in nervousness and laughter, but soon they frequently talked while walking together along the cliffs at Cape Creus. It was there he first told her he loved her. Again, he was nervous and the situation resulted in laughter from Dali. But like Dali’s mother, Gala understood all his actions. Dali said:

With her medium-like intuition she had understood the exact meaning of my laugher, so inexplicable to everyone else. She knew that my laughter was not skepticism; it was fanaticism. My laughter was not frivolity; it was cataclysm, abyss, and terror. And of all the terrifying outbursts of laughter that she had already heard from me this, which I offered her in homage, was the most catastrophic, the one in which I threw myself to the ground at her feet and from the greatest height! She said to me, ‘My little boy! We shall never leave each other”’ (Descharnes, 1998).

Dali believed Gala was the one to save him from the psychological ailments he believed he had. He had recently read a book entitled Gravida by Wilhelm Jensen, which Freud had analyzed. In the book, the main female character heals the main male character psychologically. Dali believed that in being with Gala, she would be the one to heal him in the same manner; he said, “She was destined to be my Gravida, ‘she who advances,’ my victory, my wife. But for this she had to cure me and she did cure me.” According to Dali, she did cure him: “Gala thus
weaned me from my crime, and cured my madness. Thank you! I want to love you! I was to marry her. My hysterical symptoms disappeared one by one, as by enchantment. I became master again of my laughter, of my smile, and of my gestures. A new health, fresh as a rose, began to grow in the center of my spirit” (Descharnes, 1998). After this profession of love, Gala was to return to Paris. During her absence, Dali worked a great deal on his artwork. Then, he went to see Gala again, while preparations were being made for his next art show. Together, they traveled to the seaside just days before his show was to open. On January 30, 1934 they married in a civil ceremony (Descharnes, 1998).

After his brief honeymoon with Gala, Dali traveled home to face the brewing family storm. There was a breach in the family between Dali and the others due to Dali’s negative depiction of his father in the painting The Enigma of William Tell. Also, his father was outraged by an act he viewed as blasphemous and offensive to the dead—Dali had used a picture of the Sacred Heart to write a statement that read, “Sometimes I spit on the picture of my mother for the fun of it.” In his own defense he said, “In a dream one can commit a blasphemous act against someone whom one adores in real life, one can dream of spitting on one’s mother... In some religions, spitting is a sacred act.” Dali’s father was outraged but assumed his son would soon come begging for forgiveness. However, with Gala’s presence, Dali no longer needed his father’s help and instead the couple utilized their own resources including Dali’s own home in Cadaques.

To physically symbolize the familial break, Dali shaved his head, saying:

But I did more than this—I had my head completely shaved. I went and buried the pile of my black hair in a hole I dug on the beach for this purpose, and in which I interred at the same time the pile of empty shells of the urchins I had eaten at noon. Having done
this I climbed up on a small hill from which one overlooks the whole village of
Cadaques, and there, sitting under the olive trees, I spent two long hours contemplating
that panorama of my childhood, of my adolescence, and of my present (Descharnes,
1998).

**Adulthood**

Dali and Gala began to retire to Cape Creus whenever they were exhausted or in despair.
Dali loved this area and believed that it was the principle of paranoiac metamorphosis in a
tangible form. This natural area also embodied Dali’s principle of hardness. Dali had an entire
theory of “hardness” and “softness,” the roots of which can be seen in the renowned soft watches
he portrayed in his paintings. Dali recounts the story of how he came to paint one of his most
famous paintings, *The Persistence of Memory* (see Appendix C, Picture 1):

Instead of hardening me, as life had planned, Gala... succeeded in building for me a
shell to protect the tender nakedness of the Bernard the Hermit that I was so that while in
relation to the outside world I assumed more and more the appearance of a fortress,
within myself I would continue to grow old in the soft, and in the super-soft. And the day
I decided to paint watches, I painted them soft. It was on an evening when I felt tired,
and had a slight head-ache, which is extremely rare with me. We were to go to a moving
picture with some friends and at the last moment I decided not to go. Gala would go with
them, and I would stay home and go to bed early. 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. This
picture represented a landscape near Port Lligat, whose rocks were lighted by a transparent and melancholy twilight; in the foreground an olive tree with its branches cut, and without leaves. 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. I saw two soft watches, one of them hanging lamentably on the branch of the olive tree. In spite of the fact that my head-ache had increased to the point of becoming very painful, I avidly prepared my palette and set to work. When Gala returned from the theater two hours later the picture, which was to be one of my most famous, was completed (Descharnes, 1998).

After this painting was completed in 1931, an American dealer quickly purchased it. The dealer, Julien Levy ultimately made Dali famous in the United States and laid the foundation for Dali’s later wealth. Initially, he did not believe the painting would sell, however, it ultimately did several times and is now located in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It was not long after this painting was sold to an American dealer that Dali became obsessed with going to America himself. However, despite his reputation and influence at the time, he did not have the financial resources to make such a journey. So, Dali went knocking on doors until he found someone to support his move, none other than Pablo Picasso himself, however he would not actually travel to the US for a few more years (Descharnes, 1998).

In the meantime, beginning as early as 1933 Dali began a period in his art when he was fascinated by bread. He professed a love for using bread as an inkstand and professed his general love for bread to everyone possible. His fascination with bread was apparent in his artwork (See Appendix C, Picture 27), and he claimed he “had the gift of objectifying my
thought concretely, to the point of giving a magic character to the objects which, after a thousand reflections, studies, and inspirations, I decided to point to with my finger.” This fascination with bread and other edible objects lasted for a large portion of his career (Descharnes, 1998).

Throughout this period, Dali continued to be active in creating artwork with many other mediums as well. He had exhibitions in America, wrote poetry, helped with the publication of two periodicals, and helped Luis Bunuel with another film—*The Golden Age*, in 1930. With this film, their collaboration did not go as smoothly because they had differing opinions on what the work should depict. In the end, Dali was disappointed by the movie. However, the biggest scandal resulted from the reactions of the audience to first see this film, as a riot ensued. Subsequently, the film was banned (Descharnes, 1998). Of course, Dali loved the scandal of it all, saying: “I should have been willing to cause a scandal a hundred times greater, but for ‘important reasons’—subversive rather through excess of Catholic fanaticism than through naïve anticlericalism. As foreseen, Bunuel had betrayed me, and in order to express himself, had chosen images that made the Himalayas of my ideas into littler paper boats” (Descharnes, 1998).

In 1933, Dali wrote his *Mythe tragique de l’Angelus de Millet*, which was his interpretation of the painting, *The Angelus*, that had fascinated him during his youth and from which themes could be seen in many of his own paintings (See Appendix C, Picture 5). Dali felt that many of Jean-Francois Millet’s paintings had erotic undertones and in this particular painting, he felt that there was another story. In fact, he may have been correct. He believed that the two figures in the painting were really praying over a child’s coffin and in more recent X-ray examinations of the painting a shape similar to that of a coffin has been discovered. Some of his “reproductions” of this painting include: *The Atavism of Twilight, Archeological Reminiscence of the ‘Angelus’ by Millet, Angelus of Gala, and Gala and the Angelus of Millet Immediately*
Preceding the Arrival of the Conic Anamorphous (See Appendix C, Picture 28 and 29) (Descharnes, 1998).

In general, 1934 was an especially busy year for Dali. He had six solo exhibitions, two of which were in New York, two of which were in Paris, one in Barcelona, and his first show in London. He considered baking giant loafs of bread between 15 and 30 meters to place at all the major cities in Europe. During this time, he was also developing and utilizing his critical-paranoiac method. In his artwork that year he continued to deal with food, creating odd pieces, which involved bread, cement, chairs, chocolate, and statues of Buddha. He describes these pieces in his book, The Secret Life of Salvador Dali, in great detail, concluding each description with, “And what does that mean eh?” (Descharnes, 1998).

It was at this time that the Surrealists began to get worried about his artwork, yet Dali felt the public loved it. He said, “I’ll give it to you, I’ll give you reality and classicism. Wait, wait a little, don’t be afraid.” Dali began to view himself as the sole authentic Surrealist. In fact, he announced himself as such when he made his entry into New York on November 14, 1934 (Descharnes, 1998). Biographer Robert Descharnes notes, that Dali exhibited his megalomania more outrageously than ever when he noted:

Surrealism was already being considered, as before Dali and after Dali . . . Deliquescent ornamentation, the ecstatic sculpture of Bernini, the gluey, the biological, putrefaction—was Dalinian. The strange medieval object, of unknown use, was Dalinian. A bizarre anguishing glance discovered in a painting by Le Nain was Dalinian. A ‘impossible’ film with harpists and adulterers and orchestra conductors—this ought to please Dali. . . The bread of Paris was no longer the bread of Paris. It was my bread, Dali’s bread. Salvador’s bread (Descharnes, 1998).
During his travels to the United States aboard the Champlain in 1934, Dali coaxed the captain into having a large loaf of bread baked for him to be ready when they arrived in New York. Dali had hoped to give it to the waiting journalists just as Saint Francis had done for birds, however, the journalists could not have cared less about the bread. Instead, they asked numerous questions about his artwork. His attempts to imitate Saint Francis were some of his better moments on the ship as he spent most of his time afraid of drowning or fearful that somebody would steal one of his paintings (Descharnes, 1998). Dali did well in New York and sold several paintings. He and Gala attended a Dream Ball while they were there, where the guests attempted to emulate the images and ideas presented in Dali’s artwork. Dali admitted that the ball even astounded him, who was rarely impressed. He dressed up as a corpse while Gala wore a doll on her head that looked like a baby’s corpse. They received assistance for their costumes from a Mrs. Crosby who acted as their guide throughout their stay in America. Dali and Gala went home together on the Normandie (Descharnes, 1998).

Soon, Dali was in Paris again, encouraging the decadent European Art Nouveau movement. As usual, Dali felt he was an integral part of the goings on around him:

I can no longer canalize it, or even profit by it. I found myself in Paris which I felt was beginning to be dominated by my invisible influence. When someone . . . spoke disdainfully of functional architecture, I knew that this came from me. If someone said in any connection, ‘I’m afraid it will look modern,’ this came from me. People could not make up their minds to follow me, but I had ruined their convictions! And the modern artists had plenty of reason to hate me. I myself, however, was never able to profit by my discoveries, and in this connection no one has been more constantly robbed than I. Here is a typical example of the drama of my influence. The moment I arrived in Paris, I
Dali launched the ‘Modern Style’... and I was able to perceive my imprint here and there merely in walking about the streets... Everyone managed to carry out my ideas though in a mediocre way. I was unable to carry them out in any way at all (Descharnes, 1998).

Dali referred to this time of his life as the period of “discouraging” innovations because his painting sales were down and people stole his inventive ideas. Some of these included: false fingernails with mirrors to look at oneself in, transparent window mannequins that could be filled with water and fish, furniture made from molds of the purchaser’s body, dresses with padding to create a feminine type to match the erotic fantasies of men with false breasts in the back, and streamlined car chassis. Most of his ideas were labeled insane at the time, but some actually ended up on the market including fake fingernails and the streamlined cars (Descharnes, 1998).

After their visit to Paris, Dali and Gala journeyed to Cadaques where he reconciled with his father. However, his sister Ana Maria was not as receptive to Dali’s wife. Reportedly she spat on the floor when Gala entered the house. While there, Dali and Gala planned for their first trip to Italy, where they would seek funding for a ballet. Also during this time, he painted *Face of Mae West Which may be Used as an Apartment* and *Eco Nostalgico* (See Appendix C, Picture 30). They returned to Paris before long where they set up house and it seemed that Dali had finally achieved the success for which he and his wife had been fighting. After their difficulties with the surrealist movement, the two again returned to Cadaques for a summer of work (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

During this time, Dali attempted to reconnect with his old friend Lorca, by writing him a letter. To historians, it seems apparent during this time through both his actions and his artwork that Dali was suffering from a mental fatigue, which Dali referred to as a ‘psychical depression’. It is speculated that his relationship with Gala may have been partly to blame. Fellow artists
from the surrealist movement give some insight into the true nature of their relationship, which may have been less than intimate. Sources indicate that it may have at that time degenerated into voyeurism as Dali and Gala would have “sexual investigation sessions” where Gala would go into intimate detail about her sexual habits. Additionally, it has been reported that on some occasions she would engage in intercourse with other men, including possibly her ex husband, in front of Dali (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Consequently, during this time Dali seemed focused on his past, particularly his relationship with Lorca. It is apparent in several artworks produced at the time including *Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano* and *Atavistic Dusk* (See Appendix C, Picture 31). These occurrences may be due in part to the fact that he had recently been psychoanalyzed, a process which he had greatly enjoyed. Biohistorians believe that this return to thoughts of his youth may have also provided an escape for Dali from his marriage to Gala. He was at this time very dependent on her for everything and while he loved her, as she acted as both mother and wife to him, she was also incredibly demanding. They both were highly focused on his artwork and it was of the utmost importance to Gala that his creativity be expressed (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Nonetheless, Dali and Lorca did meet again on September 28, 1935. The two of them, Gala, and another friend Edward James had lunch. Lorca was delighted to see his friend again after seven years they surprisingly got along extremely well. Lorca called Dali his ‘twin spirit’ citing their agreement on everything even after seven years apart and referring to him as a genius. Soon they were meeting every day. Dali wrote his last letter to Lorca in March 1936; Lorca would be shot and killed during the Spanish Civil War later that year (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).
Soon Dali and Gala were back in Paris, where they were reliant on the support of their friend Edward James, whose financial backing allowed Dali to work creatively without being concerned with money. Dali would begin to become even more outlandish and eccentric in his behavior (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). On January 24, 1936 he had a lecture in which he had a woman enter wearing an omelet on her head. As he and Gala’s fame and financial status rose, they both began dressing and eating better. The changes were obvious to friends and followers as they became more fashionable and ready to wield their influence. In July 1936, he attempted to give a lecture at a Surrealist exhibition in London wearing a diving suit. He nearly suffocated himself in the process, but gained the media attention he desired. Later that year, he is featured on the cover of *Time* magazine (See Appendix C, Picture 32) (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Meanwhile, on July 18, 1936 the Spanish Civil broke out. Though his friend Lorca would die after being taken prisoner, Dali distanced himself from the war, being careful not to support any side so he would be able to return to Spain regardless of who won. This demonstrated a great degree of self-absorption, which many of those who knew him found unattractive. Although Dali himself was safe, his home in Cadaque’s was destroyed and his home in Port Lligat was nearly destroyed. Dali stayed in London, selling a portrait of Gala to create income (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali and Gala journeyed to Paris again and then to Italy so that Dali could view the work of the great Italian Renaissance. Fifteen years later the artwork he viewed during this trip would have an enormous impact on the direction his own artwork took. Once again they returned to Paris where after a brief time, Dali and Edward James (his benefactor) became lovers. Gala, who herself had been in such relationships allowed this to happen to an extent (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). James noted:
Gala more than guessed how close Dali and I were to each other—and now [in about 1936] accepted it as workable, even after she did once create a scene of jealousy one night in a hotel in Modena, which erupted into a scandal—with Dali coming to my room in tears and wearing only the top of his pajamas . . . He stood protesting outside the door how he could not stand her nagging about Lorca and now about me any longer (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

James also noted of Dali and Gala:

His real interests were instinctively far more homosexual than heterosexual; Gala tried to believe that she had cured him of his homosexuality, but she knew in her heart that she had not really at all. She had however managed to keep it “sublimated” (if you can call it that) by channeling it into erotic drawings and some obscene pictures which are owned by private collectors who buy pornography. Pierre Colle . . . offered me one small brilliantly painted oil which was sheer pornography (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

After three years, the threesome ended after Gala cheated James out of some paintings that were rightfully his. After some time, Dali and Gala traveled to America again and eventually on to Hollywood, where Dali hoped to work in film. In 1936 he achieved this goal, through some work with the Marx brothers. Soon he returned again to Europe where he created *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, which had an accompanying poem (See Appendix C, Picture 9). Together, they represented Dali’s subconscious and conscious mind. This painting is one example of the fact that Dali’s paintings are much more than illustrations of the surrealist style, and specifically his paranoiac-critical style, they are autobiographical. After some more traveling, Dali and Gala settled in Italy for the duration of 1937 (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).
In 1938 and 1939, Dali faced more obstacles and triumphs. Dali and Gala planned to leave for New York on February 15, 1939. As usual, scandal followed him when he produced some shocking storefront windows. When the store replaced his creations with more acceptable figures, Dali took it upon himself to take action. In front of a large crowd he took hold of a bathtub, which was in the display window and tried to turn it over, however it was heavier than he anticipated. The result was he not only overturned the bathtub, he broke the window. He stepped through the window after it, nearly injuring himself and was then arrested. He was freed later that night; however, the Surrealist movement and others who knew Dali were outraged by his behavior (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). One of Gala’s former lovers proclaimed in an outburst:

Dali . . . is forced (in order to arouse a little interest in his painting, which basically nobody likes) to create scandals in the most clumsy, grotesque and provincial way imaginable, and in this way succeeds more or less in attracting the attention of certain transatlantic imbeciles consumed with boredom and snobbery; but it looks now as though even these imbeciles have begun to have enough of it (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

However, five days later when his next exhibition opened, Dali was again a hero. At the end of the exhibition he had sold over $15,000 worth of work. In a Time magazine article shortly after, Dali told them that surrealist art was on its way out and soon the period of paranoiac painting was beginning. This referred to his double image paintings such as The Image Disappears, which at first resembles Vermeer’s Young Girl Reading a Letter, and then the viewer can see a picture of a bearded man (See Appendix C, Picture 33). That summer, he again faced trouble when he was intended to do a great deal of work for the World’s Fair. After much compromise, the exhibition opened on June 15, accompanied by a press release that James had
organized which was titled, "Is Dali Insane?" This was followed quickly by another conflict over the ballet he had been working on (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

At the end of the year, Dali wrote to James, telling him of the immense work he had recently done. Biohistorians note that truly, James misread Dali, as he never fully understood how manipulative he could be. In reality, Dali could be as manipulative as needed to achieve his own interests and protect both himself and Gala. After Dali's split from James, he spent the following summer with Gala in Archachon where they made plans to travel to America once again (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

There, he created works such as *Old Age, Adolescence, Infancy (The Three Ages)* (See Appendix C, Picture 34) and 15 other paintings. During their time in America they migrated from place to place depending on where Dali felt most creative, spending much of his time writing but also working on other various endeavors. In 1942, he published *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, which was an autobiography. In 1944 he published his first novel, *Hidden Faces*. In 1945 he worked with Hitchcock on the film *Spellbound* that featured a dream sequence with sets designed by Dali. In 1946 he created drawings for Walt Disney. Finally, by the end of his eight-year stay in America, Dali would again develop a new phase in his painting (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

In 1948, Dali returned to Europe to Port Lligat to continue his painting there. Soon, he entered yet another stage of his career with a turn towards a new theme. During the 1950s and 60s much of Dali’s artwork was preoccupied with themes of religion, history, and science. His paintings took on a grander scale with works such as *Christ of St. John of the Cross* and *Galatea of the Spheres* (See Appendix C, Picture 35 and 36) (Descharnes, 1998). Most of them featured his wife Gala, who is often depicted as the Virgin Mary, as in *The Madonna of Port Lligat* (See
During this time his father died (in 1950). Dali also had an exhibition in Washington and designed a nightclub, though it never was actually built. Generally, these two decades were incredibly productive for Dali and he produced many works and through his abilities and behavior, he continued his “love affair” with the media. According to biohistorians, in the 1950s Dali created a second personality—a clown, over which he still had a great deal of control. Through this personality he manipulated the media to fulfill the void he had in feeling he never proved himself to his father (Descharnes, 1998). However, as Dali grew older, he lost control over this personality and the lines between the clown and his true self began to blend. In the end, these Surrealist antics became who he was, a part of his real life.

In 1960, Dali wrote *Diary of a Genius* in which he congratulated himself on his still handsome appearance. He was fifty-six at the time and Georges Mathieu commented of him:

> Endowed with the most prodigious imagination, with a taste for splendor, for theater, for the grandiose, but also for games and for the sacred, Dali disconcerts shallow minds because he hides truths by light, and because he uses the dialectic of analogy rather than identity. For those who take the trouble to discover the esoteric meaning of his movements, he appears as the most modest and the most fascinating magician, who carries lucidity to the point of knowing that he is more important as a cosmic genius than as a painter (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali himself contended that his abilities as a painter were really a small part of his overall genius and magic (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

At this time, Dali’s world was changing, as many of his old friends were growing old and dying. Yet, he was being rediscovered by the younger generation, particularly the young Parisian intellectuals. This new generation would be interested in not only surrealism as a whole
and not only in Dali's painting and political views but in his personality and his fame. His attitude toward sexual curiosity also struck a chord with a generation seeking sexual liberation (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). He became their mascot of liberation and of eccentricity as the flower child movement took off in Port Lligat. He could even be called a father figure to this movement. However, unlike those in the new hippie movement, Dali continued to work hard and lead a very disciplined, productive life. Though, the hippies did provide him a supply of young boys and girls for his sexual cabarets (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

Dali continued to work on a variety of projects throughout the 60s. This was due in part to Gala's insistence on creating revenue. He published several more written works during this time and in 1962 Robert Descharnes published a book entitled *Dali de Gala* about the famous couple. While many viewed Dali as a genius to be followed, in his home country he was not as well respected (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). During the 70s Dali created the Dali Theatre-Museum in Figueres and another Museum was opened to feature his work in Cleveland, Ohio. Today this museum is located in Saint Petersburg, Florida. In both museums large collections of his work were housed, which included selections from all his different periods (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

His last artwork, *The Swallowtail* was painted in 1983 (See Appendix C, Picture 38). Many of the paintings Dali created between 1970 and 1983 feature classical themes and figures. For example, *Athens is Burning!—The School of Athens and the Borgo Fire* (See Appendix C, Picture 39). His work in 1983 seemed to feature very different styles. These paintings included *Bed and Two Bedside Tables Ferociously attacking A Cello* (See Appendix C, Picture 40) and of course his final piece *The Swallowtail*, which appears to be very postmodern (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).
In 1980 a retrospective exhibition of Dali’s work was shown in London. In 1982 Dali’s wife Gala died after complications caused by a fall. Her decline and death were difficult for Dali. She died on June 10th leaving behind questions about the relationship between the two that could never be answered. Many biohistorians still would wonder whether there was true love between the two or if it was actually a relationship based on financial convenience (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

In 1983, another retrospective exhibition was shown in Madrid. After this, Dali’s life began to wind down, as he seemed to be in despair over his lost love. He moved into a castle in Pubol after having been named the Marques de Pubol in Torre Galatea. In 1984 he was severely burnt in a fire that occurred in his room. By this time he had stopped painting. He died from heart failure while visiting his home in Figueres on January 23, 1989. There, he was buried in a small theater that earlier in his life, he had worked to restore (Descharnes, 1998).

As many art critics and historians would say, Dali and his impact on popular culture endure. His books are available to be read, his films are available to be watched and more notably, his artwork is available for viewing at museums all over the world. Many are easily recognizable and as critics and historians have noted, his paintings are often better resources for insight into his life and mind than his autobiographies. If one seeks to analyze Dali’s mind, one must begin with his artwork.

The Artist’s Work

Salvador Dali’s artwork is often so shocking that it would be easy to label him with some sort of psychosis. Laymen might label him as a schizophrenic or completely cut off from reality in some way, because his art seems to be just that, completely unrelated to reality at all. However, his paintings are indeed deeply rooted in his own reality and the things that influenced
him during his early life. Therefore, it seems that Dali’s artwork would indeed be the best place to start in determining what drove this unique artist. With artwork that is oftentimes sexual and disturbing, it is easy to find themes suggestive of the psychological movement that Dali himself was a fan of—Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis.

*Psychoanalytic examination*

By viewing Dali’s body of work as a whole and the events that occurred in his life, a number of psychoanalytic determinations can be made about the great artist. These are illustrated in a table locate in Appendix A.

*Dalí’s developmental fixations*

According to psychoanalysis, Dali most likely would have been labeled with an anal fixation. Freud believed that a fixation could occur in any stage of psychosexual development if the person became obsessed with the behavior that occurred at that stage. The possibility that Dali himself had an anal fixation can be seen in his early childhood when he purposely defecated throughout his house in order to annoy his father (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). When he joined the surrealist movement, many were concerned that he had a scatological obsession because of his artwork. This can best be seen in the painting, *The Lugubrious Game* (See Appendix C, Picture 47), which depicts among other images a man who is wearing underwear soiled with excrement (Descharnes, 1998). By depicting such an image in his artwork in addition to the actions he engaged in as a child, it is easy to diagnose Dali with an anal fixation.

Also, many historians suggest that Dali had a physical relationship with his mother, which he himself alludes to in his novel, *Hidden Faces*. This is of course a perfect illustration of the Freudian concept of the Oedipal Complex. Freud defined this as occurring in the phallic stage of psychosexual development when children supposedly fall in love with the opposite sex
parent and therefore feel a rivalry with the same sex parent. Normally children do not actually act on these attractions and eventually grow out of them, however, Dali seemingly did not. The way that Dali treated his mother would perhaps suggest that he was indeed in love with her. In turn, he indeed strongly disliked his father, which is a second component of the Oedipal Complex.

Dali’s attraction to his mother is explicitly illustrated in the painting, *The Enigma of my Desire (My Mother, My Mother, My Mother)* (See Appendix C, Picture 48). His dislike of his father is illustrated in the painting, *The Enigma of William Tell* (See Appendix C, Picture 25). The painting, which depicts an odd image of a man who has a large piece of flesh protruding from between his butt cheeks and is supported by a crutch, was explained by Dali: “William Tell is my father and the little child in his arms is myself; instead of an apple I have a raw cutlet on my head. He is planning to eat me. A tiny nut by his foot contains a tiny child, the image of my wife Gala. She is under constant threat from his foot. Because if the foot moves only very slightly, it can crush the nut.” As usual though, Dali further complicated things by giving William Tell/his father the features of Lenin (purely to anger the surrealists). Regardless, the paintings and the biographical evidence provided by Dali and others definitely indicate the desire that Freud suggested occurred in an individual with an Oedipal complex.

**Defense mechanisms**

In order to protect his ego from the effects of his anal and phallic fixations, Dali may have utilized defense mechanisms. The most obvious defense mechanism, which can be applied to Dali, is that of sublimation. Freud suggested that sublimation occurred when someone had a desire, which could not be fulfilled in polite society. So, instead they channel that energy into a socially desirable outlet. Freud himself suggested that the act of creating artwork was often an
outlet for sexual desire. Throughout the body of Dali’s artwork, there are many sexually suggestive and even sexually explicit paintings, which indicated that he was sublimating his sexual desire into this creative outlet.

Also, in his life Dali demonstrated the defense mechanism of rationalization, which Freud stated occurs when someone attempts to ‘rationalize’ individual circumstances by reframing them in his/her mind. The prime example of this in Dali’s life occurred when he was expelled from the surrealist movement. Rather than feel unfortunate about the events that occurred, he instead told others that he truly wanted to leave the movement in order to reach a new phase in his artistic style and career. Although this may be true, the fact that he continued to paint in the same style would suggest otherwise, which could indicate that he truly was utilizing the defense mechanism of rationalization.

In relation to his attractions to his mother and hatred of his father, Dali exhibited displacement by doing poorly in school to annoy his father rather than outright attacking him. Additionally, it could be argued that in his painting, The Enigma of William Tell, Dali displaces some of his anger towards his father onto a more socially recognizable figurehead—Lenin. Also, Dali demonstrated this defense mechanism by turning his sexual affections towards his sister when his mother was no longer available as a sexual outlet.

**Instincts**

Dali’s artwork also implies that he was subject to the two basic instincts that Freud wrote about—*Eros*, or the sex drive, and *Thanatos*, the death instinct. Although Dali claimed he was impotent, it is obvious from his own autobiographies that he engaged in sexual relations with a number of men (including Garcia Lorca and Edward James) and women (who most likely
included his sister, possibly his mother, and his wife, Gala). His overwhelming sexual desire can be seen in a number of his paintings.

A few prime examples of Dali's most sexually explicit work include: *The Great Masturbator* (See Appendix C, Picture 41), *Young Virgin Auto Sodomized by her Own Chastity* (Appendix C, Picture 42) and *The Specter of Sex Appeal* (Appendix C, Picture 43). With all of these paintings, the titles themselves say a great deal about the content and immediately provide evidence for the suggestion that Dali was one of a number of artists creating artwork due to sublimation. However, the paintings themselves also indicate such. In *The Great Masturbator*, which Dali created in 1929 when he was just entering the surrealist movement and group, he depicts a scene that is graphically sexual. The majority of the painting and the portion, which first catches the viewer's eye, is a soft self-portrait of Dali, an image he used in several paintings, including the well-known *The Persistence of Memory*. However, the viewer quickly notices the grasshopper, which has an abdomen covered in ants, affixed beneath the nose of the portrait. Yet, the painting gets even more disturbing and even more sexual. Rising from the upper right hand part of the portrait is a woman's head. Her eyes are closed, she tilts her head up, lips pursed, preparing to give fellatio to the lower body of a man that is also depicted (Descharnes, 1998). The other paintings mentioned also have sexually explicit themes. In *The Specter of Sex Appeal*, Dali depicts a mangled and dismembered female body, which is being looked at by a young boy on a beach. Other works suggest sexual themes in more subtle ways.

Dali displayed not only *Eros*, but also *Thanatos* in his work. Included among these are: *Portrait of my Dead Brother* (Appendix C, Picture 43), *The Apotheosis of Homer* (Appendix C, Picture 44), *The Tomb of Juliet* (Appendix C, Picture 45), and *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)* (Appendix C, Picture 46). The first of these is obviously
concerned with that event that may have triggered his obsession with death—the death of his brother, which resulted in Dali’s unusual entrance into the world. *The Apotheosis of Homer* and *The Tomb of Juliet* are depictions of literary references to death. Both paintings are dark in nature. The former of the two depicts mutilated female forms. This painting and a few others were created in response to the first atom bomb being dropped on Hiroshima. They constituted a new technique that he referred to as “nuclear” or “atomic painting” which he worked at during the 1940s. The final painting that is representative of his *Thanatos* instinct is *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*. This painting depicts mangled bodies, which have been ravaged by the effects of war. Dali himself claimed he was fascinated by disease and decay. He also admitted to an obsession with death, all of which are key characteristics of Freud’s “death” instinct (Descharnes, 1998).

Through analysis of his artwork, it is easy to see that Dali may indeed have had a number of diagnosable mental disorders. Not only did he exhibit a number of defense mechanisms and psychosexual fixations, but he also gave into both his sexual and aggressive/death drives. Freud believed that normally, an individual’s ego suppresses these urges, however it seems that try as he might through sublimation; Dali could not suppress his sexual drive. Perhaps because of his anal and phallic fixations, he never reached full sexual maturity. This might explain his attraction to bizarre stimuli, as illustrated in his artwork, as well as his multiple sexual affairs.

The Artist’s Mind

Freudian themes can indeed be seen throughout Dali’s artwork, and Freud’s theories can indeed be utilized to analyze the surrealist artist. However, they may not provide the most definitive answer to what may have ultimately caused the outlandish behavior that began in Dali’s childhood and remained pervasive throughout his adulthood. Unfortunately, because of
Dali’s awareness and admiration of Freud’s theories, one must wonder if his artwork is really a reliable source by which to analyze his mind. This is because, one must wonder, are Dali’s paintings a case of art imitating life or a case of art imitating a theory? For more answers, one must turn to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, to make a clinical diagnosis.

*Clinical diagnosis*

Though, Dali’s artwork and life easily lend themselves to psychoanalytic interpretations, there may perhaps be a deeper cause for both his disturbing artwork and outlandish behavior. In the opening chapter of his biography of Dali, biographer Robert Descharnes gives us his view of Dali which begins with a quote from Charles Baudelaire, “A dandy must be looking in his mirror at all times, walking and sleeping.” Descharnes applies this quote to Dali and then goes on to tell of Dali’s constant need for mirrors “of many kinds: his pictures, his admirers, newspapers and magazines and television. And even that still left him unsatisfied.” To illustrate this, Descharnes recounts one particular story from a Christmas, when reportedly, Dali walked the streets of New York carrying a bell that he could ring when he felt people were not paying enough attention to him, because, “The thought of not being recognized was unbearable” (Descharnes, 1998).

Dali in fact referred to himself as a megalomaniac, who is defined as someone with a mania for great or grandiose performances, alternatively, it is a mental disorder indicated by infantile feelings of personal omnipotence and grandeur (Descharnes, 1998). Today, with the help of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Dali would most likely be diagnosed with a clinically defined mental disorder—that of Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Although, Dali is no longer alive to assess for such a disorder, by examining his life and behavior, a tentative diagnosis can be made. Throughout his life, Dali acted in a manner that was characteristic of
someone with this particular personality disorder. As defined in the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), the criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder are:

Diagnostic Criteria for 301.81 Narcissistic Personality Disorder

A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
2. is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
3. believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
4. requires excessive admiration
5. has a sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations
6. is interpersonally exploitative, i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her ends
7. lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others
is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her

shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes

Throughout recounts of his life, it is easy to see most, if not all, of these diagnostic criteria through behaviors that Dali displayed even at a very young age, although Narcissistic Personality Disorder cannot be formally diagnosed until adulthood. Many historians cite the cause of Dali's egotistical nature as stemming from his need to differentiate himself from his deceased brother (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). This is a logical explanation for the onset of his narcissism. Perhaps Dali felt that he had to fight for the attention of others, assert his individuality and even superiority to justify his existence. After all, he felt his very existence had caused his brother's death—a burden that was emotionally and psychologically damaging (Etherinton-Smith, 1992). As though being simply named after his older brother was not unusual and challenging enough, his parents openly demonstrated their love and devotion, and perhaps in the case of Dali's father, even a preference for the first Salvador. It is no wonder, that the artist, Salvador Dali, could have developed this personality disorder. Narcissistic personality disorder is after all a disorder, which at its core often protects a person from low self-esteem by endowing them with an unrealistic sense of their own importance in life. By examining Dali's life, the proof can be found which meets the diagnostic criteria for this disorder

Criterion 1

One of the core components of narcissistic personality disorder, grandiosity (criterion 1), can be seen in the artist's behaviors throughout his life. Grandiosity is defined as an inflated self-esteem or self-worth, usually manifested as content of thinking or talk with themes reflecting the patient's belief that he or she is the greatest or has special attributes or abilities (American
Psychiatric Association, 1996). One need only look at any one of the many quotes from the artist throughout this paper to see the high self-opinion that Dali maintained. He indeed had a grandiose image of himself, thinking that he was the true surrealist, believing that he had an invisible influence on Paris, and writing about himself in countless books. These include *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, *Diary of a Genius*, and *Hidden Faces* among others. Many of these books paint unrealistic images of his life as he exaggerates details and often makes himself come out looking like a hero in every story (Etherinton-Smith, 1992).

**Criterion 3 and 9**

Of course, Dali’s relationship with his wife Gala as well as his interactions with the surrealists support criterion 3—he believed that he was “special” and unique and could only be understood by other special or high status people. For example, through Dali’s writings about Gala, it is obvious that he viewed her as extraordinary. He felt that above all others; she understood him and had the ability to save him from whatever psychological demons he might face. Also, Dali’s initial attempts to support and fit in with the surrealist movement demonstrated his need to be valued and understood by other high status people (the arts community). However, later, when he fell out of favor with the surrealists, Dali began to see himself as superior to the surrealists and their movement. This illustrates, that not only did Dali view himself as understood only by other high status people, but also that regardless of his high regard for them and especially after they have fallen out of his favor—he continued to view himself as special in comparison to them. There is no better illustration of this uniqueness than Dali’s famous quote in which he proclaims that the difference between himself and the other surrealists is that *he* is a surrealist (Descharmes, 1998). The very fact that Dali did not even start the surrealist movement and yet he viewed himself as the true surrealist demonstrates that he
viewed himself as special and unique—evidence also for the ninth criterion—showing arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

*Criterion 4*

One can easily see that Salvador Dali met the fourth possible criterion—requiring excessive admiration. Even as a child, Dali dressed and acted in a way that would draw other’s attention. He adored the ministrations of his mother and enjoyed startling his classmates with his flamboyant dress. This need to be the focal point can be seen throughout his childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. He did such things faking sickness because of the attention it afforded him. When he was at school, his fear of grasshoppers was yet another thing that caused importance to be placed on him. Later, he encouraged the admiration of his friend Lorca in order to continue to build himself up while associating with only the most elite students.

Dali used his manner of dress to act as a tool to draw attention to himself. He wore a rather long mustache, which he always kept waxed so that it formed two curved points and he continued the habit started in his young adulthood of dressing as a dandy. He enjoyed being the central figure of the hippie movement in Europe. They admired his personality and ironically enough, their attention towards him continued to feed an ever-growing need for admiration and honor. Dali was, in fact, one of a few artists to achieve fame during his lifetime. Historians noted that first, he used a flamboyant personality to gain this following. However, eventually he lost all distinction between this personality and his true self, which most likely only worsened the problem.

In several instances, Dali admitted that he loved the controversy his actions often caused. (For example, when the surrealist group was upset about his controversial paintings.) Needless to say, the more controversy that surrounded him, the more attention he felt he gained. He
purposely did things to upset his fellow surrealists and his father in order to gain the notoriety that scandal brought him. Additionally, the pure shock value of many of his paintings brought him additional attention from the general public. Perhaps, he had no Oedipal Complex, perhaps he was not obsessed with sex, and rather creating artwork that suggested such things brought him even more of the scandal and attention, which he craved. His acting out in various ways while giving lectures and working on his art, such as appearing in a diving suit to give a lecture or when he broke the glass window with a bathtub were more behaviors that brought him the awareness he desired (Descharnes, 1998).

Criterion 6 and 7

During the many wars that took place during his lifetime, Dali demonstrated his lack of empathy for others (criterion 7) by always putting himself first, and always being most concerned with his own safety and his own ability to continue creating his artwork. Additionally, Dali would advance himself at any cost, even manipulating (criterion 6) his friend and benefactor Edward James. These facts fulfill criteria six and seven from the DSM.

All of the behavioral evidence from Dali’s life as a whole supports the hypothesis that he did truly meet the criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder. In this respect, if Dali truly had Narcissistic Personality Disorder, it sheds an entirely different light on his artwork. Yes, his artwork is disturbing and it suggests a number of psychological problems diagnosable with the use of the psychoanalytic perspective. Perhaps Dali was a man working to alleviate the internal conflicts of being stuck in the early developmental stages of psychosexual development and therefore operating on pure narcissistic pleasure principle, which he gratified through fame gained from his artwork. However, what if his art was truly an imitation of a theory? Dali’s artwork demonstrates a certain degree of intelligence; certainly he may have been intelligent
enough to realize that the shock value of an anal fixation and an Oedipal Complex for example, would bring him additional controversy and thus additional attention. What better way to satisfy the needs of Narcissistic Personality Disorder than through the attention garnered by his edgy, and often disturbing, actions and artwork?

Conclusion

Dali was a man who loved controversy. It delighted him to be at the center of a scandal—to be questioned. If Dali were alive today, no doubt he would feel that same delight in knowing that in analyzing him, he creates as many questions as he does answers. An overwhelming amount of evidence from his life, coupled with images found in his artwork do indicate a number of psychological problems as defined by Freud's theories. However, because Dali's actions throughout his life strongly indicate he may have had Narcissistic Personality Disorder, it is difficult to discern how much was based in reality and how much was dramatized by him to gain the fame and notoriety he craved. Without the ability to observe the great artist in person, these hypotheses cannot be called fact—only educated and well-founded conclusions. Yet, one fact remains, Dali was an amazing artist who ultimately achieved exactly what he desired—attention, admiration, and immortality through his work.
Appendix A

Table-Psychoanalytic illustrations of Dali’s life

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biographical event</th>
<th>Psychoanalytic explanation of behavior</th>
<th>Related artwork</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much of Dali’s artwork depicts sexual themes, which suggest that he may have been</td>
<td><em>Sublimation, Eros</em></td>
<td><em>The Great Masturbator, Young Virgin Auto sodomized by her own chastity; The Specter of Sex Appeal</em></td>
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<td>redirecting his sexual desires into creative endeavors.</td>
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<td>Dali was named after his deceased brother, as a child he was frequently taken to see</td>
<td><em>Thanatos</em></td>
<td><em>Portrait of my Dead Brother, The Apotheosis of Homer, The Tomb of Juliet, and Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)</em></td>
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<td>the grave, which had Dali’s name on it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a child, Dali deliberately wet the bed and defecated in his house to upset his</td>
<td><em>Anal Fixation</em></td>
<td><em>The Lugubrious Game-Painting depicts a man with underwear soiled with excrement.</em></td>
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<td>father and gain attention.</td>
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<td>As a child, Dali worshipped his mother. His book, <em>Hidden Faces</em>, indicates a sexual</td>
<td><em>Oedipal Complex, Displacement</em></td>
<td><em>The Enigma of My Desire (My Mother, My mother, My mother)</em>, <em>The Enigma of William Tell-Dali explained this painting as a depiction of his father desiring to eat his infant son. However, Dali portrayed his father with the likeness of Lenin.</em></td>
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<td>attraction towards her as well as a potential sexual relationship. Consequently,</td>
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<td>he had a tumultuous relationship with his father and purposely behaved in ways that</td>
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<td>would upset him. For example, he would perform poorly in school. After his mother’s</td>
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<td>death, he had an incestuous relationship with his younger sister, Ana Maria.</td>
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<td>When Dali was expelled from the surrealist movement, he argued that it happened by</td>
<td><em>Rationalization</em></td>
<td><em>The Enigma of Hitler-The surrealists disapproved of Dali’s political and possibly sexual attraction towards Hitler.</em></td>
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<td>his own choice and that he was the true surrealist.</td>
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Appendix B

Figure 1 - Timeline of Dali’s Life

Dali’s Life - Important Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dali’s mother dies in February</th>
<th>1921</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In October he is accepted to art school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dali is expelled from school and arrested</td>
<td>1923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dali meets Picasso in Paris</td>
<td>1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military Service</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writes ‘The Yellow Manifesto’</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helps make Un Chien Andalau</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seduces Gala away from her Eluard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a pivotal break with his father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Paranoiac-Critical method evolves</td>
<td>1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First USA art showing</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits The Enigma of William Tell</td>
<td>1934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Important World Events

| 1900 | Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams* |
| 1906 | Lenin elected president |
| 1914 | World War I begins |
| 1917 | Lenin publishes April Theses |
| 1920 | The Nazi Party is formed |
| 1921 | Hitler becomes the leader of the Nazi party |
| 1924 | Surrealist Art movement begins, Lenin dies, and Hitler publishes *Mein Kampf* |
| 1933 | Hitler becomes Dictator of Germany |
1936 Lectures in a diving suit Makes the cover of Time Magazine

1937
Produces The Metamorphosis of Narcissis
Condemned by Surrealists for admiring Hitler

July 19 Meets Freud 1938

1939
Expelled from Surrealist Movement

Secret Life of Salvador Dali published 1942

Works with Disney and Hitchcock 1946

Returns to Europe 1949

Begins his particle period with publication of The Mystical Manifesto 1951

Exhibits in Washington DC 1956

Presents a 15 meter loaf of bread at a Theater 1958

Presents his “Ovocipede” invention in Paris 1959

Begins large format mystical works 1960

Publishes The Tragic Myth of Millet’s Angelus 1963

Publishes Diary of a Genius 1964

1938 Hitler targets Jewish people

1939 World War II begins and Sigmund Freud dies

1945 Hitler commits Suicide, US drops atomic bombs

1951 WWII officially ends

1962 Andy Warhol creates Campbell’s Soup Can painting

1963 JFK assassinated, MLK makes “I have a dream” speech

1968 MLK assassinated
1971
Salvador Dali Museum opens in Cleveland Ohio (moves to Florida in 1982)

Gala Dies 1982

Paints last picture-The Swallowtail 1983

Dali burnt in fire at home 1984

January 23, 1989
Dali Dies and in buried in Spain
Appendix C-Pictures

Picture 1: *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931

Picture 2: *Specter of Sex Appeal*, 1932
Picture 3: Young Salvador Dali, 1908

Picture 4: *The Burning Giraffe*, 1936-1937
Picture 7: *Self portrait with the neck of Raphael*, 1920-1921

Picture 8: *Cubist self portrait*, 1923

Picture 10: Salvador Dali
Picture 12: *Portrait of Luis Bunuel*, 1924

Picture 13: Lorca and Dali at Cadaques, 1925
Picture 14: *Venus and Amorini*, 1925

Picture 15: *Senicitas* (also: *Summer forces* and: *Birth of Venus*), 1927-1928
Picture 16: *Sleep*, 1937.

Picture 17: *The Hallucinogenic Torreador*, 1968-1970
Picture 18: Dali with his wife Gala

Picture 19: Average atmospherocephalic Bureaucrat in the act of milking a cranial harp, 1933
Picture 20: *The Evocation of Lenin*, 1931

Picture 21: *The old age of William Tell*, 1931
Picture 22: Dali’s portrait of Freud, 1938

Picture 23: Dali’s portrait of Freud, 1938
Picture 24: The Enigma of Hitler, 1937

Picture 25: The Enigma of William Tell, 1933
Picture 26: *Galarina*, 1944-1945

Picture 27: *Basket of Bread*, 1926
Picture 28: *The Atavism of Twilight*, 1933-1934

Picture 29: *Archeological Reminiscence of the 'Angelus' by Millet*, 1935
Picture 30: *Face of Mae West which may be used as an Apartment, 1934-1935*

Picture 31: *Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano, 1934*
Picture 32: Time Magazine cover featuring Dali, 1936

Picture 33: The Image Disappears, 1938
Picture 34: *The Three Ages*, 1940

Picture 35: *Christ of St. John of the Cross*, 1951
Picture 36: *Galatea of the Spheres*, 1952

Picture 37: *The Madonna of Port Lligat*, 1950
Picture 38: *The Swallowtail*, 1983

Picture 39: *Athens is Burning!*—The school of Athens and the Borgo Fire, 1979
Picture 40: *Bed and two Bedside Tables Ferociously attacking a Cello*, 1983

Picture 41: *The Great Masturbator*, 1929
Picture 42: Young Virgin Auto Sodomized by her own Chastity, 1954

Picture 43: Portrait of my Dead Brother, 1963
Picture 44: *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1944-1945

Picture 45: *The Tomb of Juliet*, 1942
Picture 46: *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*, 1936

Picture 47: *The Lugubrious Game*, 1929
Picture 48: *The Enigma of my Desire (My Mother My Mother My Mother)*, 1929
References


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