

## ONEIRIC HIDDEN SYMBOLISM OF DALI

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### ABSTRACT

The study speaks about Spanish artist Salvador Dali who was well-known for the surreal time, as one of the figures that 'crowned' with symbols that very sensational movement. Dali has contributed to the field of art, fashion, architecture and functional design making it influential and inspiring even today. Mainly, this study focuses on the elements presented in the artworks of Dali. Dali was one of the most famous surrealist artists, and one of the proponents of theories on oneiric symbolism. These symbols are not just artistic and surreal ones. Dali's symbolism is multifaceted in its interpretative form. In this study it is presented a form that connects the S. Freud oneiric symbolism (who was then called the father of psychoanalysis), to sexual relationship that appears in the works of the artist. What should be emphasized is that this study represents a certain interpretative form, influenced by oneiric Freudian interpretations.

**Keywords:** Symbolism, sexual, surreal, mystical decoding, impotence.

### INTRODUCTION

When we want to speak about the sexual or so-called surreal elements, more scholarly trends were those of a bridge between oneiric Freudian theories. Doubtless we can succeed somewhat to understand artworks of Dali, if based on the *transcribed* form of oneiric and surreal Freudian symbols or those of that time, which had a significant excitation by the two manifestos written by Andre Breton. As an interdisciplinary movement, surrealism faced a journey type or form associated with symbolism of Dali, which is examined in this study in symbolic perspective under the nuances of oneiric Freudian interpretation, which often go beyond the latter one.

### Freudian influence and manifesto of symbols

Sigmund Freud thought that a dream is investigating its psychic meaning and its position related to other psychological processes.<sup>1</sup> He continues to explain that the dream is a kind of "proxy", which replaces the long way of thought which is loaded with effects and rich with meaning which have to be put in terms of analysis...

The content of the dream in his opinion is shorter than thought. The process of the dream content with thoughts is called by Freud the dream displacement where the mental intensity, gravity or affective potential of some thoughts return to sensory force.<sup>2</sup> Freudian influence to Dali is seen in the way he puts elements and symbols, which can be viewed from an oneiric angle. The combination of these chaotic images leads to diffraction of symbols and their hidden elements. These symbols at first glance look like images that have a certain coherence

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<sup>1</sup>Sigmund Frojd-Mbi ëndrrën. (1997)Tiranë. "Fan Noli"

<sup>2</sup>Sigmund Frojd-Mbi ëndrrën. (1997)Tiranë. "Fan Noli" (page.41)

and chronology. Consequently, we can say that these images go beyond indirect oneiric access.

Freud divides the dream process as following:

First: the manifest of the dream.

Second: the hidden content of the dream.

Similarly we can see Dali's symbols in his works:

First: the manifesto of the symbols,

Second: the hidden content of these symbols;

Interpretative form of symbols in general is a multifaceted field. This makes difficult the logic interpretation of surreal works mainly those of Dali. Freud in his essay on dream again emphasizes that: The more opaque and confusing to be a dream, the greater will be the role that will be given to displacement factors in its formation.

Often the elements and special symbols in the works of Dali seek a decipherable and analytical form, which in most cases has led researchers into the field of surreal determination and Freudian influence. In fact until here, everything seems to match.

Consequently, I have seen these symbols in another personal study, more within their mystical context of than under oneiric nuances and surreal artistic interpretations. For as much as Dali was a genius figure, he always left open interpretative trails. What is certain and we can say with certainty is that Dali's works have nothing to do with the mental images of a turbulent activity.

As Freud saw the thoughts of the dream as a psychological complex of a complicated construction, as similar is Dalinian surreal work - complex in appearance but essentially an intricate decoding structure. Dali's elements and symbols are repeated in many of his works, characterizing so as emblematic artist.

In any work of his contemporaries male figure does not appear so weak and often with a greater sexual libido, but without a completed act. His works are mostly filled with images that have a more mystical content of a masculine's fear or impotence, which seeks to realize an erotic relationship often through symbols.

In the case of oneiric Freudian interpretation the twisted sexuality, or unfulfilled sexual desires can be manifested in the variety of symbols that Freud defines as "the hidden content and symbols of the dream".

Images and symbols went through a heterogeneous interlacement into content, creating so often an almost grotesque effect, where the interpretation of oneiric symbols by Freud is balanced to the artistic and surreal ones.

Freud says: - The highest number of symbols in the dream is that of sexual symbols.<sup>3</sup> We know the real content that is limited and symbols associated with it are extremely numerous as much as the same content can be expressed in many different symbols but with almost the same meaning.

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<sup>3</sup>Sigmund Freud. *Interpretimi i ëndrrave dhe jeta seksuale* (1997) Tiranë. "Fan Noli" (page. 37)

These symbols require the completion of the erotic lust. Inside the Dali's works often we see even the bisexual male presence that seems to require always more this erotic fulfillment that seems more fulfilled through images and symbols than in a relationship female - male. In some of his paintings draught have presented symbols that carry out this erotic lust.

In the work *The Anthroporphic Cabinet*, in 1936<sup>4</sup> the male figure appears without a certain portrait, lying and it seems that his extended left hand indicates request for assistance, supplication. It is directed toward the female figure, which seemed very much distant and turned back. Male figure is represented with an emphatic anatomical deficiency, by showing his waist too thin, prolonged and facing feet intertwined with each other.

### **The impotence and secret symbolism of Dali**

In one of the articles on the symbols of the Freud's dream, puts the emphasis to the different features to distinguish them during a dream as the drawers, cupboards<sup>5</sup> and the balconies posed terms of female genitals and everything prolonged as umbrellas, sticks, weapons, wild animals, snakes, dishes, bottles, etc., representing the male genitals.

In fact in the above work, the male figure in his own body as the chest and abdomen appear as a bedside open drawer, which in terms of symbolic show demand for psychological fulfillment.

In fact, Freud also emphasized that the aspect or thought of a dream is a structure with complicated mental content and that dreams cannot come from stimulants which have no psychological impulse. If we dwell on this male figure not even see the male body although the physical structure again we realize that it is a male figure.

In another artwork<sup>67</sup> Dali appears naked, but with an object before his genital organ, which resembles more to female organ. It is the presence of arcs where there are many interpretative forms such as religious one but not just the last one. Mountains and rocks are present and if based on symbolic interpretation of Freud they symbolize male genital organ (below, in other works, will be mentioned again this symbolic quotation of Freud).

The presence of dog in many works has received different connotations but what would make more familiar with sexual interpretation would be erotic instinct and wilderness, where although the dog is not attacking, is located near genitals of Dali. The spheres may have a molecular interpretation but they can be seen also as fertility and egg reproduction. Information sheds light on the Dali's impotence which is reflected by these sexual symbols. Dali shows that he was terrorized with sexual relations because during his childhood his father left "accidentally" on the piano, a medical book about vaginal diseases and their

<sup>4</sup> Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page. 278)

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud. Interpretimi i ëndrrave dhe jeta seksuale (1997) Tiranë. "Fan Noli"(page. 40)

<sup>6</sup> Dali Nude, in *Contemplation before the Five Regular Bodies Metamorphized into Corpuscles*, in which Suddenly Appear the Leda of Leonardo Chromosomatized by the Visage of Gala, 1954- Dali nu, en contemplation devant cinq corps reguliers metamorphoses en corpuscles, dans lesquels apparait soudainement la Leda de Leonard chromosomatisee par le visage de Gala. (page.470, image nr. 1054)

<sup>7</sup> Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis*

clinical symptoms. Dali consequently lost his interest in all forms of traditional sexual relations by developing phobia about syphilis (Gibson, op.cit).<sup>89</sup>

In the book "The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus" Dali wrote about fears of sexual connection throughout his life. He characterizes the sexual acts with the most extreme bestiality, violence and ferocity until he finds himself completely unable to perform them. This impotence did not occur because of his physical disability. He had feared the power of the disappearance of sexual relationship and the consequences it can cause horrible death (Dali, 1986, 74.)<sup>1011</sup>

These symbols actually in another form of decoding can be seen as elements with significant sexual connotations where the erotic lust urges and is manifested violently through some symbols which are explained by Freud as elements that illustrate the sexual act.

Also, we cannot say that all his works are under sexual colors. Undoubtedly they emerge from this spirit of Eros, affecting so even other forms of interpretation. What is emphasized in the works that have been analyzed in this study is that the male figure is undergoing a sort of 'exhaustion' for the fulfillment of sexual pleasure, which seems to be achieved through symbols, which fit an interpretation more Freudian than a artistic and symbolic interpretation where sexual organs were confronted with similar symbols.

In his writings on sex symbolism, Freud thinks that some of the sexual elements are represented by erotic symbols which are amplified in the mouth's organ, where many of the elements derived from it can be interpreted as the fulfillment of sexual satisfaction through another organ. Very much so, we look again this connection at the Dali's works mainly in the Portrait of Picasso, 1947.<sup>12</sup> In this work is presented an indefinite organ, which comes from the top and back of the head and underwent a deformation coming out from the mouth in the form of a second tongue, in the form of spoon holding a musical instrument in it.

He also makes some draughts<sup>13</sup> with sexual content<sup>14</sup> describing an orgy between physical and oral satisfaction that shows quite clearly that symbols are not present. In other draughts Dali presents the male figure as more animalistic and primitive as in draught<sup>15</sup> depicting a couple who had sexual intercourse which are more Kamasutra positions. In Freud's writings elements which demonstrate the compliance of erotic instincts are also the fruits and wild animals where the fruit according to Freud does not mean the child but the breasts. While the wild animals represent people with emphasized feeling or even wild feeling of passion.

<sup>8</sup> GIBSON, IAN. (1999). Salvador Dali botranyos elete. *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dali*. Aquila kiado, Budapest

<sup>9</sup> Dali, S. (2009). The Enigma of Desire: Salvador Dali and the conquest of irrational. On ONLINE JOURNAL for the PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY of the Arts

<sup>10</sup> DALI, S., (1986): Millet Angelusanak tragikus mítosza. (The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus.) Corvina, Budapest.

<sup>11</sup> Dali, S. (2009). The Enigma of Desire: Salvador Dali and the conquest of irrational. On ONLINE JOURNAL for the PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY of the Arts

<sup>12</sup> Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.410, image nr.911)

<sup>13</sup> Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.572, image nr.1281)

<sup>14</sup> Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.572, image nr.1281)

<sup>15</sup> Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.572, image nr.1281)

Flowering and flowers indicate women's genitals or in some cases the virginity.<sup>16</sup> Freud goes on to state that the real flowers are plants' genitals. It appears in another sketch of Dali where fruits like grapes, stands on both sides of an object and resembles the male organ. At the top of it is a prolonged pelican, it reminds us the explaining to children where they came from, thus giving to pelican a mythological nuance but at the same time with sexual content.

Precisely in this subject which has as a prisoner the pelican, at the bottom that resembles that of testicles are placed two chain link of grape in order to symbolize fertility. On either side of this object in the form of genitals we have a couple and on the other side two naked women being pawed. Their hairs are somewhat like bush of flowers posing again the erotic instinct regarding to sexual oneiric symbolism of Freud. Regarding the image of a wild animal, we often present the image of a lion, which again creates a symbolic link between sexual instincts. In another work<sup>1718</sup> - Dali represents the lion's head as the mountain rock which according to Freud the rock and mountain are phallic symbols.<sup>19</sup>

Again in this work are present the shrubs and flowers, where above the lion head stand up bushes and tall trees such cypresses, while into the portrait of a woman appear white and pink roses by losing thus her own identity. Again, these roses are looking to make a symbolic duality with that of Freudian sexual interpretations.

Another example is that of painting *Sympathy and antipathy in vegetables*<sup>20</sup> in which two male figures stand next to each other creating the tree trunk. Their genital organ resembles the female clitoris than a genuine male or female organ. Freud about this in his study writes that the female instinct requires the existence of a male organ. Freud sees that a female has this male organ ingrown up in her part of the clitoris. The two male figures seem to dance and are under an erotic seduction. Freud writes that rhythmic movements, dance etc ... are appearance of the sexual act<sup>21</sup>.

In all the above Dali's works seems to have a very precise accordance with interpretations of these elements with sexual content. Consequently, satisfaction and sexual fulfillment come just from the symbols that represent this relationship satisfaction.

## CONCLUSIONS

We cannot determine creativity of Dali just as a Freudian sexual one but we can see it under a Freudian symbolic impact almost punctual. The male figure which undergo an orgiastic act with each other, women who hug and create an intimacy between each other and elements which are seeking to replace a portrait or a genital organ, it seems that take place in his artwork, a certain erotic Dali - Freudian ponderousness. Meanwhile, even the male impotence or bisexuality and appearing in his draughts point again the sexual aspect.

<sup>16</sup>Sigmund Freud. Interpretimi i ëndrrave dhe jeta seksuale (1997) Tiranë. "Fan Noli" (page. 44)

<sup>17</sup> Woman with the Head of Roses, 1935. Femme a la tete de roses

<sup>18</sup>Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.252, image nr.570)

<sup>19</sup>Sigmund Freud. Interpretimi i ëndrrave (1997) Tiranë. "Fan Noli" (page. 43)

<sup>20</sup>Sympathy and antipathy in vegetables- Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.402, , image came is part of Drawings for "**50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship**",1947)

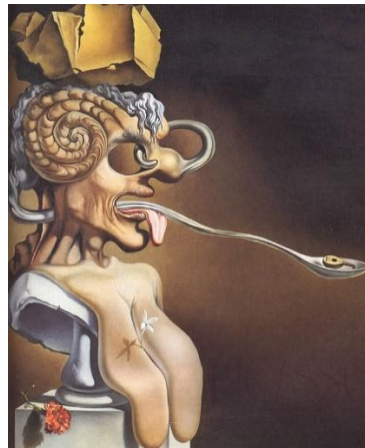
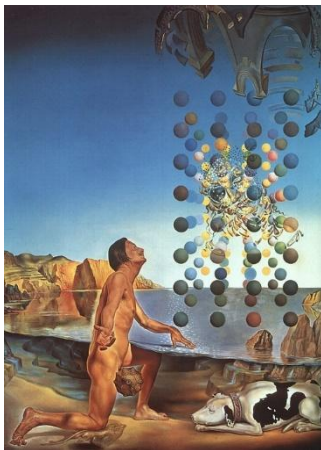
<sup>21</sup>Sigmund Freud. Interpretimi i ëndrrave dhe jeta seksuale (1997) Tiranë. "Fan Noli" (page. 42)



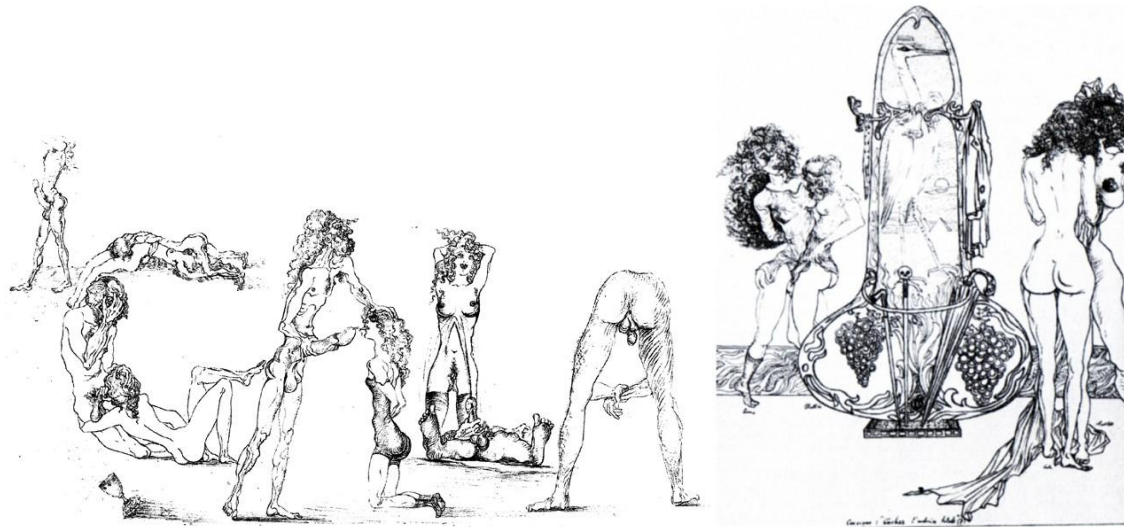
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## Paintings:

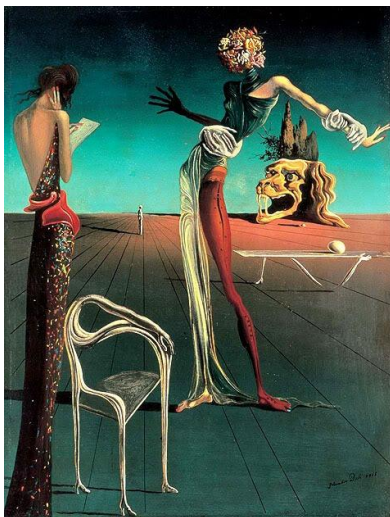


- 2.1 Dali Nude, in Contemplation before the Five Regular Bodies Metamorphized into Corpuscles, in which Suddenly Appear the Leda of Leonardo Chromosomatized by the Visage of Gala, 1954-
- 2.2 Portrait of Picasso, 1947. Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.410, image nr.911)
- 2.3 Untitled (Erotic Scene with Seven Figures), c. 1966- Sans titre (Scene erotique a sept personnages) (page.572, image nr.1281)



2.4 Untitled (Erotic Scene with Seven Figures), c. 1966- Sans titre (Scene erotique a sept personnages) (page.572, image nr.1281)

2.5 Reverie- Password: Mess up all the Slate, 1933, Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.189, image nr.426)



2.6 Woman with the Head of Roses, 1935. Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.252, image nr.570)

2.7 Sympathy and antipathy in vegetables- Dali- the paintings, (2005) Gillet Neret, Taschen, *Biblioteca Universalis* (page.402, , image came is part of Drawings for "50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship", 1947)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> This image was not uploaded online, but is taken as reference in the book above.