

Paranoid Metaphors:

An examination of the discursive, theoretical, and sometimes personal, interaction between the psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, the surrealist, Salvador Dali, and the English poet, David Gascoyne.

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Abstract:

This thesis examines the historical interaction of the psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, the surrealist, Salvador Dali, and the English poet, David Gascoyne. It traces the discursive, and sometimes personal, relationship between these figures which led to a psychoanalytic-based conception of paranoia that impacted on both surrealism and the surrealist-inspired poetry and theory of David Gascoyne. Furthermore it seeks to identify the potential ramifications of this conception of paranoia, and the artistic practice it engendered, for literary, Marxist and psychoanalytic theory.

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Prayer to my Mother

It's hard to say in a son's voice
what at heart I so little resemble.

You're the only one in the world who knows
what my heart always held, before all other love.

For this, I must tell you what is terrible to know:
in your grace was born my anguish.

You're irreplaceable. And for this
the life you gave me is condemned to solitude.

And I don't want to be alone. I've an infinite
hunger for love, for the love of bodies without souls.

Because the soul is inside you, it is you, but you
are my mother and your love's my bondage.

I spent my childhood a slave to this lofty
incurable sense of immense commitment.

It was the only way to feel life,
its only colour, its only form: now it's over

We survive, in the confusion
of a life reborn beyond reason...

taken from *Roman Poems* by Pier Paolo Pasolini

That this small biological being survives, and not as a “wolf-child”, that has become a little wolf or bear (as displayed in the princely courts of the eighteenth century), but as a *human child* (having escaped all childhood deaths, deaths punishing the failure of humanization), that is the test all adult men have passed: they are the *never forgetful* witnesses, and very often the victims, of this victory, bearing in their most hidden, i.e. in their most clamorous parts, the wounds, weaknesses and stiffnesses that result from this struggle for human life or death. Some, the majority, have emerged more or less unscathed – or at very least, give this out to be the case; many of these veterans bear the marks throughout their lives; some will die from their fight, though at some remove, the old wounds suddenly opening again in psychotic explosion, in madness, the ultimate compulsion of a “negative therapeutic reaction”, others, more numerous, as “normally” as you like, in the guise of an “organic” decay. Humanity only inscribes its official deaths on its war memorials: those who were able to die on time, i.e. late, as men, in human wars in which only *human* wolves and gods tear and sacrifice one another. In its sole survivors, psycho-analysis is concerned with another struggle, with the only war without memoirs or memorials, the war humanity pretends it has never declared, the war it always thinks it has won in advance, simply because humanity is nothing but surviving this war, living and bearing children as culture in human culture: a war which is continually declared in each of its sons, who, projected, deformed and rejected, are required, each by himself in solitude and against death, to take the long forced march which makes mammiferous larvae into human children, *masculine* or *feminine subjects*.

taken from “Freud and Lacan” by Louis Althusser

Introduction

On 25 November 2001 a British poet named David Gascoyne died, aged 85. Obituaries for the poet could be found in most of the English national papers as well as in some French publications. The *Daily Telegraph* compared Gascoyne to Rimbaud, pointing out that he had published his first collection of poetry at sixteen and remarking that, sadly, as with Rimbaud, Gascoyne “was to promise rather more than he performed” (Anonymous, *Daily Telegraph*, 1). Indeed much of the chronicling of his life in the obituaries seems to concentrate on the early period of his career, as it is here that most of the reporters appear to find something to distinguish him as a poet. The suggestion implicit in these résumés is that David Gascoyne’s life was in many ways more remarkable than his poetry, a life which is described by the *Independent* as “a long search for meaning” (Barker, 11).

The first defining step in this “search for meaning” was, as most obituaries record, his pilgrimage to France: “Gascoyne went to Paris, arriving on or around his 17th birthday, ... hunt[ing] out the works and the acquaintance of surrealist notables” (Cunningham, 3). Gascoyne’s relationship with France also seems, for most, to have defined his life and career, if indeed these are separable in his case: “There is also some truth in the French writer Philippe Soupault’s remark: ‘David Gascoyne is not an English poet; he is a French poet writing in English’” (Anonymous, *Daily Telegraph*, 4). As much as Britain might claim the right to sum up Gascoyne’s significance in death, it seems that much of this significance was as a result of him looking away from her shores: he “was that rarity among 20th-century writers: a poet who sustained a fully European consciousness and enjoyed a wide European reputation” (Cunningham, 1).

Gascoyne is commended in the obituaries for his “definitive *A Short Survey of Surrealism* at nineteen” (Barker, 1). The *Independent* goes further to remark of the poet in his youth:

To see him at nineteen seated for a week at a table in Salvador Dali’s flat in the Rue Gauguet in Paris, translating Dali’s *La Conquête de l’irrationnel* (“The Conquest of the Irrational, 1935) or helping the irascible painter out of the diving bell at the Surrealist Exhibition, because he could see he was being asphyxiated, is to glimpse the totality of his commitment. He immersed himself in the world of the surrealists, living with them, taking their political agenda to heart. (Barker, 5)

This “involvement with surrealism,” we are told by *The Times*, however, “tended, in the end to hang like an albatross round his neck, and he had to repudiate it” (Anonymous, *The Times*, 5). Indeed the *Independent* begins his obituary with what it feels is the “main fact” about David Gascoyne, which is that “he was first and foremost one of the great religious poets England produced in the 20th Century” (Barker, 1).

This might appear to one to be a radical transition, from the subversion and specifically anti-religious doctrine of surrealism, to a Christian-informed mysticism. Yet Gascoyne’s Christianity is by no means conventional and the *Independent* reminds us that “Gascoyne’s search for an authentic God and an authentic Christianity rested on his self-taught ontological approach to philosophy” (Barker, 14) which made room for dadaist and surrealist principles of subversion in creating a “via negativa” (10) to the Divine. This is no doubt what leads the *Guardian* to remark that “he remained more or less loyal to the surrealist vision all his life” (Cunningham, 1). Yet it becomes increasingly apparent when one examines the work and life of Gascoyne in more detail that his “ontological approach” also gains much from his interaction with surrealism in particular. Even more specifically, it stems from his encounter with the theory of Dali.

If it is true that Gascoyne took the “radical political agenda” of the surrealists “to heart”, then in 1933, the date of his arrival in Paris, he would also have taken on the crisis in that very agenda. This was the crisis which precipitated and dominated the second phase of surrealism following the *Second Surrealist Manifesto* of 1929. In this manifesto the surrealist leader, André Breton, attempted to deal with the question of political legitimacy raised in the movement by growing communist sympathies. Breton was searching everywhere for a synthesis between the subjective preoccupations of the surrealists and the demands for objective results made by the communists. If Gascoyne took anything to heart, it was this divide, which would haunt English surrealism on the eve of fascism’s ascendance in Europe.

Dali is frequently portrayed as a mere prankster and publicity-seeker in the histories; his theoretical manifestos dismissed as another mode of posturing. Yet, in the midst of this tension between the ideologies of surrealism and communism, Salvador Dali produced a theory of phenomenological ontology based on paranoia, which promised to unite the subjective and objective, personal and political. This theory, expressed both in his work and theory of that time, including his definitive article on the subject, “The Conquest of the Irrational”, offered surrealism a reply to awkward questions of political commitment.

Gascoyne was acquainted with this article, as well as Dali's theory, as early as 1935 and it is the position of this thesis that this knowledge was to have a profound impact on Gascoyne's own philosophy. Indeed it even informs his subsequent religious mysticism and also offers an explanation for this shift.

Dali's approach made it possible for surrealism to impact practically on the objective world: surrealist art and writing now had the potential to transform society. The need for this was echoed by the surrealists at the London exhibition of 1936, including Gascoyne, who collaborated on a commentary that was published in the final edition of the *International Surrealist Bulletin*. Those who put their names to the article felt acutely that the rise of autocratic states in Europe necessitated the "resolution of a series of existing conflicts; reality with the dream; society with the individual; the ideology of the artist with his creativity" (Breton, "What is surrealism?", 334). Dali's method indicated that the union between an artist's convictions and his unconscious was possible and even desirable.

Dali had already begun to articulate what would become his paranoid-critical method of interpretation and artistic creation in texts predating "The Conquest of the Irrational". The stage is set for the theory as early as an article in 1928 and is most coherently expressed, prior to "The Conquest of the Irrational", in an essay published in 1930, *L'Anne pourri*, "The rotting donkey".

Dali derived much of his understanding of paranoia from Freud, the man whom the surrealists credited with the conceptions which underpinned their movement. In many ways "The rotting donkey" is a radical interpretation of Freudian ideas which would have a considerable impact on psychoanalysis via the theory of Jacques Lacan. Lacan is generally acknowledged to be the most influential interpreter of Freud in France and it has been suggested (albeit controversially) that he came by his singular interpretation of Freud through his interaction with the surrealists, and Dali in particular. As will appear, my judgement of the evidence favours those who take this viewpoint.

Elisabeth Roudinesco argues that it was Dali's "The rotting donkey" which "made it possible for Lacan to move on to a new understanding of language" (31). David Macey in his introduction to *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* suggests that with respect to Lacan's reading of Freud, "the importance of surrealism can hardly be over-stated, and Salvador Dali's theory of 'paranoiac knowledge' is certainly of great relevance to the young Lacan" (xv). Dali met Lacan, at the latter's request, following the publication of "The rotting donkey" in order to discuss his understanding of paranoiac

forms of knowledge. Lacan was at that time writing his doctoral thesis which would deal specifically with paranoia. Dali, in turn, praised Lacan's thesis for the position it took in not dismissing the creative aspects of paranoid delusion as arising from some deficiency.

If there was one element that allowed Lacan to break with the psychiatry in which he was trained, and which still thought in organicist terms and was still capable of using degeneracy as a diagnostic category, it was probably the encounter with surrealism. (Macey, xv)

It seems almost certain that otherwise "Lacan might have been imprisoned forever within the confines of psychiatry and an academic understanding of Freud" (Roudinesco, 89).

Furthermore, it is likely that Lacan's treatment of paranoia, contained primarily in his doctoral thesis of 1932, resonated within surrealist circles and in Dali's theory in particular. Finkelstein suggests that Dali's discursive interaction with Lacan was responsible for the development of his paranoid theory as set out in "The Conquest of the Irrational". This was the article which David Gascoyne at nineteen would translate with so much commitment and no doubt also "take to heart".

George Orwell, upon reading Dali's autobiography which he refers to as "simply a striptease act conducted in pink limelight" (225), calls the artist as "anti-social as a flea" (229) and cites him as "a symptom of the world's illness" (232). It seems ironic then that an artist so easily dismissed as degenerate or infantile should be the source of a philosophy which has both profoundly affected psychoanalytic theory and also offered an insight into the nature of the dialectic connecting the subjective and objective worlds.

Perhaps it is through Lacan's terms that one can best gain insight into Dali's theory, but this is no matter of employing a suitable "model", simply, because of the linked genesis of Lacan's theory and Dali's art. Lacan postulates that "the paranoid experience and the worldview it generates together constitute 'an original syntax'" (Macey, xvi). Here Macey is quoting from a study of paranoid crime conducted by Lacan in 1933, but this thesis will show that Lacan himself is quoting Dali in turn. Gascoyne, also inspired by Dali's reflections on paranoia, seeks out this "original syntax" through his work and eventually gives it metaphysical proportions. Both Gascoyne and Lacan inherited and interacted with Dali's idea of the world as the product of imaginary signifiers, and a primary signifying structure which is dialectic in nature. In such a world we perceive this structure and its products, paranoiacally, as reality. Our world and our

knowledge are therefore, at base, paranoid: a situation which may well be inescapable in character, as both Dali and Lacan seem to argue.

The radical and challenging character of this nexus of ideas, evolved at a highly charged moment in twentieth century cultural and political history, will be the centre of interest in this thesis. Though the origins I shall be exploring may have been allowed to slip into some obscurity, their widespread repercussions in later decades is beyond question – especially if their significance is admitted. Unravelling this highly influential conceptual knot at the moment of its making will permit us to trace the subsequent strands of their history in the intellectual lives of three figures: the artist Dali, the psychoanalyst Lacan, and the poet and religious mystic, David Gascoyne.

What follows is thus a study of paranoia and how it relates to signification and the construction of reality around conventions of signification. It will also become apparent that to seek any meta-narrative or structure, even one as seemingly benign as history, is (I shall argue) to engage in a form of paranoid impulse. Yet there is also some attempt to recover a history which seems to have been lost to representation. This is a lack Dawn Ades points out in commenting on the surrealist attitude towards psychoanalysis:

They had to keep their distance from the practice of psychoanalysis, from the institutionalisation of a discipline. It could not be part of their project to accept as given Freud's ideas in toto; a full account of their long and tortuous relation with the founder of psychoanalysis has still to be written, as has the sibling relationship with Lacan. (Ades, "Afterword", 206)

This thesis is by no means a full account, but aims to firm some of the limbs of that family tree which Ades implies exists. As one will observe, however, Dali, Lacan and Gascoyne are not only related through their debts to Freud, or each other, but also through their examinations and exploitations of paranoia.

Chapter One

I. 1931, Freudian Footnotes

Lacan completed his thesis, *On Paranoid Psychosis in Relation to the Personality*, in 1932, while chief resident in a psychiatric clinic (Clément, 55). The thesis was largely a reaction against the constitutionalist attitude surrounding paranoia in the French psychiatric establishment of the time, “this frenzied paranoia according to the ‘official’ textbook, akin to a kind of feeble-mindedness” (Clément, 57). Mental disorders had for the most part been viewed as springing from biological or genetic deficiencies. Freud battled against just such conceptions when he suggested that psychiatric pathology was a result of the disjunction of complexes which everyone carries within their psyche. These complexes exist in communication with the normal subject via the unconscious and furthermore they can be re-cathexed¹ at any time. This re-cathexis leading, very possibly, to an imbalance which may result in psychosis.

The pathogenic phantasies, derivatives of repressed instinctual impulses, are for a long time tolerated alongside the normal life of the mind, and have no pathogenic effect until they receive a hypercathexis....
(Freud, “Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality”, 203)

This quotation is taken from Freud’s “Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality”, an article which Lacan himself translated in 1931 (Roudinesco, 32). According to Bowie, “Freud in his paper... had made it possible to think of paranoia as one of those pathological disorders that helped to reveal the infrastructure of ordinary mental activity” (38).

This paper was influential in a case study Lacan presented later the same year on paranoia. This study, in turn, suggests Lacan’s doctoral thesis in embryonic form. The case was that of a schoolteacher who believed herself to be Joan of Arc and wished to restore the grandeur of France (26). More than anything else Lacan seemed concerned with the style of her “inspired writings” (Clément, 56) but he did not “try to interpret” any of this writing, instead he “simply analyzed its paranoid structure in terms of semantic, stylistic and grammatical abnormalities” (Roudinesco, 26). The traditional constitutionalist approach defined this writing as the confused ramblings of a

¹ Cathexis is the Freudian term for the way in which a node in development is invested with libidinal energy. Re-cathexis of energy stored in these nodes leads to either renewed repression or regression, but always an attraction to infantile organisations of the instincts. Re-cathexis is both a re-investment of energy as well as a release of previously fixated energy.

degenerate, “assuming a norm and a need to repress that which departed from it” (27). Clément argues that Lacan’s complicity with this view is revealed in his presentation of this case to the establishment: “he said that this delirious writing was ‘brief and impoverished’,” that “nothing is, broadly speaking, less inspired than this writing, which is felt to be inspired” (57).

In contrast to this opinion, Roudinesco feels that even at this stage Lacan was agreeing in his official work (however implicitly) with the surrealist and literary avant-garde. These groups felt that the psychotic’s writing did not only support both meaning and intent, but that it was valuable to discern and make oneself receptive to such meaning. Lacan then was perhaps “drawing on the surrealist experience rather than a model provided by traditional psychiatry” (26), in asserting that that these “Écrits ‘inspirés’” (Lacan, *On Paranoid Psychosis in Relation to the Personality*, 180) arose from a “process similar to that which lay behind poetic creations..., it was partly automatic and partly deliberate” (Roudinesco, 26). The writing of the psychotic for Lacan was not altogether arbitrary and could possibly give a clue as to the nature of the cause, and perhaps even the cure, of the disorder. The idea that it might be of poetic value is one Clément attributes to Lacan, but only in his non-academic contributions of this period. She insists that it was with his “other hand”, the “left hand” that he wrote in one art periodical of the time:

The life experience of the paranoiac and the world view it engenders may be thought of as a novel form of syntax, which enlists its own peculiar means of comprehension for the purpose of affirming the community of mankind. (57)

This passage shows, as Clément points out, that for Lacan there is a “need to understand [paranoid syntax]” (58), indicating that it is comprehensible to the so-called sane. More dramatically, however, merely the use of the word “style” suggests that psychotic writing is only a variation on the language of the “normal”: “Fluid are the boundaries that separate the play in words from the poetic invention, the premeditated device from the chance discovery, the frenzy of madness from the Lacanian norm” (Clément, 59).

II. 1932, The Thesis

Roudinesco suggests that Lacan’s thesis was created “in the full flush of surrealism” (55), and represented a synthesis between Freudian and surrealist thought, specifically that represented by the work of Salvador Dali. The extent of Lacan’s

involvement with Dali and his influence on his theory will be examined in subsequent chapters. It remains important, however, before attempting such a judgement, to examine Lacan's ideas as indicated in his thesis.

Lacan's doctoral thesis concerned the case of Marguerite Pantaine, whom he would re-christen Aimée in his work, after a character in one of her own "inspired" novels. Aimée/Marguerite had been arrested for attacking a famous actress with a knife. She claimed that the actress had been persecuting both her and her son. At the same time she addressed letters to the Prince of Wales pleading for recognition, assistance and rescue.

Lacan uses the case of Aimée to press for a non-constitutionalist idea of personality, taking his cues from Freud's evolving theory on paranoia. He attempts to indicate that personality comprises a dynamic psychological process formed in response to determinate biographical events. This dynamic system (personality and its structures) is not only evident in the forms of the subject's paranoid delusion but is also moulded by the interaction of forms in the delusion. Lacan maintained in his thesis that personality

...was influenced by three things: biographical development, meaning the way subjects reacted to their own experience; self-concept, meaning the way they brought images of themselves into their consciousness; and the tension of social relations, meaning their impressions of how they affected other people.
(Roudinesco, 45)

Formative biographical events of Aimée's life had subjected her personality to an initial systemization in which these events were granted a defining significance (a primary historization). The fact that she had been given the same name as a stillborn sister (35) had, for example, resulted in the evocation of a psychical ideal, under whose shadow she both laboured and desired. Her son would later comment, "It is no accident that my mother spent her whole life trying in every way she could to escape the flames of hell..." (35). Aimée's struggle was to avoid the temptation to that state which afforded her ideal its status, namely the damnation of premature death.

This intrasubjective rivalry established with an infantile ideal was reinforced by a subsequent struggle with another sibling for the affections of Aimée's husband (38). Her attack on the actress was hence prompted by a desire to strike at her own ideal (which she had projected onto the unsuspecting *primadonna*). The figure of the actress had sparked an imbalance in the economy of her psyche, re-cathecting pre-existing forms in the personality; "From ancient grudge break to new mutiny" (Shakespeare, 1.1.3). Her

personality had become dominated by these spectres obtained in the course of her life, with every situation bound to these first hieroglyphs.

The paranoiac system was brought to bear on the world by means of her projections: delusions and paranoiac interpretation. The formations, which spoke through her personality, were particularly present in her creative literary output. Lacan points out that often there are themes in her writing which prefigure her attacks and troubles (Lacan, *On Paranoid Psychosis in Relation to the Personality*, 181). This accords with the subject's own reflections on the influential effects of her artistic process, that she "follows her 'masters'" when she writes, adding, "the blank page must always remain mysterious" (1). Furthermore this is in agreement with the earlier suggestion that Lacan's notion of paranoiac creation, in keeping with the conception of the surrealist activity of automatic writing, is "half staged elsewhere and half intentional" (Roudinesco, 27). This then was a communication between primary shapes of the personality and the contemporary, the "master" here being one re-activation of the controlling ideal. Lacan's later work will suggest greater dimension to that which Aimée referred to as her "masters", namely language itself.

Essentially, Lacan maintained Freud's interpretation of paranoia as re-presenting the revival of a moment of homosexual fixation in development. The same-sex ideal (originally a point of identification and narcissistic desire) is seen as persecutory in paranoid psychosis. Here the actress, who stood in for Aimée's rival siblings - both alive and dead - became the persecutor. The narcissistic pleasure inherent in ideal identification (a homosexual desire) is pitted against the law (pleasure principle against reality principle), which favours the repression of this passion. The sublimation, which normally provides substitution for the homosexual impulse (an outlet), is absent and the law asserts itself in violent repression. Aimée seemed to be aware that her admiration for the actress was indeed illegitimate homosexual desire (something she rallied against through her professions of fidelity to the Prince of Wales) and so sought the censure of the law as the satisfaction of her quandary. In his thesis Lacan suggests that such individuals be inserted into a community which emphasises sublimating homo-social relations: "such kinds of social outgoing afford people with repressed homosexual tendencies a satisfaction that is all the greater because it is sublimated and so less likely to lead to any conscious revelation" (Roudinesco, 47).

Roudinesco shows that Lacan used Aimeé's case to introduce a diagnosis of "self-punishment paranoia", quoting from his thesis,

...the object that she [Aimée] strikes has a purely symbolic value, and the act brings her no relief. Nonetheless, by the blow that rendered her guilty in the eyes of the law, Aimée has also struck at herself, and this brings her the satisfaction of fulfilled desire, and the delusion, having become superfluous, disappears. It seems to me that the nature of the cure reveals the nature of the disease. (48)

This is an indication of a desire on the part of Aimée to cast off her narcissistic pleasure and embrace the brutalising sanction of the law. This then acted as a corrective procedure, long overdue, which, brought about a normalising of relations. This was because the delusion had substituted (and it would seem, effectively, in the end) for the patient's normal functions of development. The paranoid personality eventually accomplished in physical reality what the normal personality had already resolved (however temporarily) at the level of the psychical, freeing up her reality. This substitutive nature of paranoid delusion finds support in the article that Lacan translated. Freud cites an example of a patient, who was unable to translate his narcissistic desire into homo-social sublimation: "The whole of his youth was governed by a strong attachment to his mother" and that "...one had the impression that only the delusion had carried forward the development of his relations with men, as if it had taken over some of the arrears that had been neglected" (Freud, "Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality", 202).

It seems from this quote that Lacan, as early as his reading of this article, may have also encountered some notion of a failure of the paternal function in the development of paranoia, namely that it was strong attachment to the figure of the mother which precipitated paranoia. As yet, however, he gives no indication of such a universal developmental structure. In his thesis Lacan was still allowing for some idea of identity which transcended the paranoid matrix and which, in his opinion, influenced it to such a degree: a "prior situation" as Roudinesco alludes to it (48). Indeed, he became "notorious for later having disowned it [the thesis] on the ground that the paranoid psychosis simply *is* the personality and that therefore there can be no question of a relationship between them" (Walsh, 65).

Bowie, however, seems to claim that this was already the Lacanian position, even as early as his thesis,

the problem lay not with the term [paranoia] itself but with the uses to which psychiatry had put it. The patient, once liberated from the grip of paranoia in its narrowest technical sense, was to rediscover the condition – but on equal terms with his or her fellow human beings. (Bowie, 39)

This is certainly the case with later Lacanian theory, but it seems that Bowie overstates the case in anticipation of it.

In “Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality”, Freud also wrote that paranoia could be initiated by the denial of a claim for love and recognition made by the subject of a contemporary “rival-ideal”:

Since we know that with the paranoiac it is precisely the most loved person of his own sex that becomes the persecutor, the question arises where this reversal of affect takes its origin; the answer is not far to seek – the ever-present ambivalence of feeling provides its source and the non-fulfilment of his claim for love strengthens it. (201)

Psychosis can result, then, from the frustration experienced by an individual who is unable to identify with same-sex ideals in society (thereby sublimating narcissistic desire), due to hostile social relations. Lacan comments on this in his thesis:

Modern society leaves the individual in a cruel state of moral isolation, one especially painful in regard to occupation so indeterminate and ambiguous that they themselves may be a source of permanent internal conflict. Others besides [sic] myself have emphasised the extent to which the ranks of paranoia are swelled by those unjustly degraded as inferior or limited. (Roudinesco, 47)

Lacan will later expand on this idea to include occupations in which subjects encounter discursive *discordance*, although he will have to prove the material effects of discourse before he can do so.

The suggestion here, however, seems to be that socio-material relations may directly influence, precipitate or recall pathological realities; a social dialectic may recathect or even initiate an internal one: “...madness arises out of a life, and thus out of a materialist nexus – and a materialist nexus whose materialism is a ‘historical materialism,’ at that” (48).

Sublimation itself means that the history of the patient is included in subsequent social realities, and, in fact, may determine them. Furthermore this “history” is always potentially present, perhaps only requiring the overthrow of sublimating structures to exhibit itself. Paranoia then shows that it is a “style”, a variation on the themes played out in everyday life: “The delusion speaks the truth. It aggravates what would elsewhere, in more banal circumstances, be power relations. It is fabulously commonplace” (Clément, 60). In “Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality”, Freud had suggested that the paranoiac does not “project...into the blue, where there is nothing of the sort already. They let themselves be guided by their knowledge of the unconscious” (201). This means that the delusion is often only, and not

always erroneously, interpretative or supplementary. Lacan seems to be extending the ramifications of this, hinting (but not as Bowie would suggest, arguing) that what the paranoiac may project in the extreme, is already to be found in the “normal”.

It was also in this article in which Freud hinted that the unconscious was a system of thought, rather than that place where thought had no birthright, when he comments that “Dreams are distinguished from waking thought by the fact that they can include material (belonging to the region of the repressed) which must not emerge in waking thought. Apart from this, dreams are merely a *form of thinking*” (Freud, “Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality”, 204). Starting from this, Lacan would go further to suggest that the unconscious was in fact a discourse, a “style” littered with recognisable figures of speech. Such concepts, however, were only present in the doctoral thesis in their infancy, but their scope would eventually eclipse their parentage. Certainly the implications of the thesis were that “madness” was contained within everyone and that it resulted from originally environmental factors. Further suggestions were that paranoia was capable of elucidating, manipulating, and even creating, social relations. This dual emphasis on linguistic disruption and on social relations meant that through the publication of his thesis, Lacan gained recognition in both communist and surrealist discourse.

In the art journal, *Le Minotaure*, to which Lacan himself contributed, Salvador Dali praised the thesis: “Because of it we can for the first time arrive at a complete and homogenous idea of the subject, quite free of the mechanistic mire in which present-day psychiatry is stuck” (quoted in Roudinesco, 60). Dali retrospectively reflects, that

Psychiatry, before Lacan, committed a vulgar error on this account [paranoia] by claiming that the systemization of paranoiac delirium developed “after the fact” and that this phenomenon was to be considered as a case of “reasoning madness.” Lacan showed the contrary to be true: the delirium itself is a systemization. It is born systematic, an active element determined to orient reality around its line of force. (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 141)

Dali affirms that prior to the Lacanian thesis, psychiatry saw paranoia as the response of consciousness to a physical deficiency, the way in which a mechanical problem was “managed” by the psychology of the patient. He notes that Lacan instead indicates that personality arises from fundamental formations. The personality then is that primary systematisation of instincts which constitutes the subject. The paranoiac *appears* to demonstrate variations from the norm in this systematisation (another style), resulting in pathological behaviour. The determinate formations of the personality are only evident

because of their subsequent manifestations. Primary structuring determines one's identity and controls one's destiny. The paranoid delusion is therefore contiguous with the structure or formations of the personality which initiated it. Lacan outlined this position in an article in *Le Minotaure* in 1933,

The murderous drive that we consider the foundation of paranoia indeed would only be a scarcely satisfying abstraction, if it was not controlled by a series of correlative abnormalities of socialized instincts, and if the actual state of our knowledge about the evolution of the personality did not allow us to consider these instinctual abnormalities as contemporaneous in their genesis.
(Lacan, *Motives of Paranoid Crime*, 2)

The paranoia springs from an organisation of instincts "contemporaneous" with the foundation of the personality itself. In other words it is, until Lacan collapses the distinction, an alternative arrangement of material. As Lacan points out, if the paranoid delusion did not reflect the organisation of the paranoid subject, then its causes would remain forever veiled in an arbitrary reaction to a physical deficiency. As Dali points out about this realisation, the "true real is within us and we project it when we systematically exploit our paranoia" (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 143).

Lacan's concern with the history of the subject and the effect of environmental, and thereby material, factors on the formations of the personality, meant that his thesis was also welcomed by the French communists. A review in a communist newspaper in 1933 saluted the thesis as reacting "against the various idealisms currently corrupting all research into psychology and psychiatry" and showing "the definite and conscious influence of dialectical materialism" (Roudinesco, 59). Ragland-Sullivan's comments on Lacan's thesis support this opinion: "In his doctoral thesis (1932) Lacan theorized that the phenomena of personality could only become truly comprehensible if studied in terms of a socially and humanly meaningful dialectic" (130). To this he also added the need to deal with the patient's "history".

Freud's own conception of paranoia displayed a dialectical movement, namely that the reality principle negates the pleasure principle in sublimation. The pathological regression and repression that results in the delusional system or, more commonly, the symptom, negates sublimation and the reality which necessitated it.

If symptoms can serve the purpose both of sexual satisfaction and of its opposite, there is an excellent basis for this double-sidedness or polarity in a part of their mechanism which I have so far been unable to mention. For, as we shall hear, they are the products of a compromise and arise from mutual interference between opposing currents; they represent not only the repressed but also the

repressing force which had a share in their origin. (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 342-343)

The desire contained within the pleasure principle should, on encountering the reality principle, find satisfaction in sublimation. If sublimation is frustrated then recathected desire will insist on a return to its former objects and organisation. Yet this return still encounters repression since “A regression of the libido without repression would never produce a neurosis but would lead to a perversion” (388). The original negation is negated, but results not in that which was originally negated but in a new condition.

With the inclusion of the biography of the subject in his consideration of this process, Lacan indicated how the original structuring of the instincts (influenced by material factors) underwent many subsequent historical encounters which would influence the eventual shape of the delusion or symptom. Indeed these historical events may well be used to mask the original structuring of the instincts in the delusion or symptom, while, simultaneously, recalling this original structure. Repression here does not only resist the cathexis of the original structuring “events”, but may also actively cathect other events, in order to continue to mask the original in substitutive representation (on the condition that these are in some way associated with that event). The symptom presents a certain unity which contains within it the dialectic between repression and pleasure. It becomes a tug-of-war between two forces both bound to the chain of associations they employ as the measure of their success.

Let us now go back to the symptoms. They create a substitute, then, for the frustrated satisfaction by means of a regression of the libido to earlier times, with which a return to earlier developmental stages of object-choice or organization is inseparably bound up. They search about in the history of their life until they find a period of that sort, even if they have to go back as far as the time when they were infants in arms – as they [the neurotics] remember it or as they imagine it from later hints.

(Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 412)

One will later become aware how this chain becomes one made up of metaphor and metonymy for Lacan.

Identity itself carries within it an implicit contradiction, that between the modes of conscious and unconscious expression. In addition to this, quantitative changes in the subjective economy result in qualitative changes in the life of the patient. The normal subject is really only a “successful symptom” in which the reality principle may have won the contest, but the rope is still very much taut.

It would seem that Aimée, along with the surrealists, not only informed Lacan's medical thesis but also influenced the style of his work.

[H]e took from his familiarity with paranoid inspiration his knowledge of a dangerous and subtle game; he walked the fine line between communication and non-communication, between light and darkness: the *midre*, or mid-speak, the art of the half-spoken thought. (Clément, 59)

Roudinesco refers to the tenor of the thesis as "a baroque style in which a dialectic between presence and absence alternated with a logic of space and motion" (47). The dialectic she refers to is that between Lacan's appropriation of the authority of others and his simultaneous disregard of it, "heir to a long and venerable tradition, and solitary pioneer of new knowledge" (46). This process does seem to echo the supplementary nature of projection suggested by Freud in his analysis of paranoia, that the paranoiac's ideas find support in established forms while emptying them. It also accords with the surrealist (and Aimée's) shaping of established discourse around desire, and, in turn, affording that discourse ontological implications. Clément suggests that that the language of the paranoiac is "a dangerously open language. Open, first of all, to invention, to words that do not yet exist. Open too to poetics – which comes to the same thing...Such was the dialectic that Lacan chose for himself" (59).

Lacan had indicated that paranoia was a systematisation which had formative effects on personality, yet he still needed to identify the recurrent universal images which played a part in this structuring. Although these form part of Lacan's later opus, it is necessary to engage with them for two reasons. Firstly, it is of interest to examine to what extent his later theory may have been influenced by his early encounters with the artistic avant-garde. Secondly, his later work never abandons his theory of paranoia, merely expanding on it so that it can realise its potential as an interpretative framework for both social reality and literature. This framework will afford us with the best means of assessing the process behind (and very possibly in) the work of David Gascoyne in the last section of this thesis.

III. Lacan's Imagery

The forms introduced by Lacan, like those of Freud before him, are at once both theoretical and figurative. Freud's psychoanalysis was in essence a metaphor for existence which took on phenomenological proportions.

It was only with the help of the psychoanalytic investigation of the neuroses that it became possible to discern the still earlier phases of the development of the libido. These are nothing but constructions, to be sure, but, if you carry out psychoanalyses in practice, you will find that they are necessary and useful constructions. (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 369)

Freud's "constructions", such as the Oedipal complex or castration anxiety, are "only" personally significant representations of the development of the human psyche. His drive towards the unconscious itself may be the product of "a certain original desire, something in Freud, [which] was never analysed" (Lacan, "Excommunication", 12). For Lacan, however, the Austrian psychoanalyst's desire sought something which is common to human experience, but which had been lost to conscious knowledge: "The already found is already behind, but stricken by something like oblivion." (7). Although Freud was only able to represent these primary processes in metaphorical expression, he did, however, manage to identify for conscious knowledge the point at which the subject is an interlocutor between primary formations and contemporary experience. This is the Freudian unconscious. Lacan would show that the maintenance of both Freud's, and the subject's, desire and sanity is the very thing which would prevent the primary and contemporary forms from intersecting with each other.

It will become clear that one can only approach the formations on which one's identity rests tangentially without risking the collapse of desire into perversion or psychosis. Yet a stealthy perimeter raid is possible, primarily through the agency of metaphor. This is because, in Lacanian theory, a metaphorical process constitutes identity itself and therefore the mechanism of metaphor mimetically repeats the structure of the human psyche, as well as the composition of its messages. Metaphor for Lacan is a substitution of one term for another, where the substitution displaces the original, but maintains it in the qualities it recalls. These qualities then metonymically represent the alienated term.

It [metaphor] springs from two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) relation to the rest of the chain.
(Lacan, "Agency of the letter in the unconscious", 157)

Lacan argues that these linguistic structures are identical to the psychical ones Freud identified in dreams². He concludes that the unconscious is made up of signifiers

² *Condensation* is equated with metaphor – a single signifier substituted for multiple others, all part of a chain, and *displacement* with metonymy – a "veering off of signification" (Lacan, "Agency of the letter in the unconscious", 160), the "true" signified displaced from the signification.

and that its structures are those of the signifier: “The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows about the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifier” (170). This unconscious is, as one will observe later, the only *language* of the paranoiac.

Building on his earlier thesis Lacan went on to show that the paranoid delusion represents universal formations of the personality, common to psychotic and non-psychotic alike. Paranoia is identified in the way in which it projects psychical “reality” into the physical world, finding there, wherever it can, and hallucinating where it cannot, support for these “shades”. The paranoid psychotic has mistaken the psychical for the plastic, or rather they have become indistinguishable. This process, however, is not unique to the paranoid subject, as Lacan indicates that such misrecognition is at the base of everyone’s personality. Everyone begins the process of identity by mistaking images for the real.

In fact, this formal fixation, which introduces a certain rupture of level between man’s organisation and his Umwelt, is the very condition that extends indefinitely his world and his power, by giving his objects their polyvalence and symbolic polyphony, and also their potential as defensive armour. (Lacan, “Agressivity in psychoanalysis”, 17)

With Freud one observed how, in order for the subject to gain access to social reality and identity, certain instincts had to be sublimated (in other words receive an acceptable representation). For Lacan what is displaced to the unconscious in substitution are not only the instinctual drives, but also the images which they have adopted as signifiers at a primary level. The primary language is therefore an “imaginary” one. At the conscious (secondary) level these imaginary signifiers are “sublimated” by symbols. These symbols act as metaphors which in their representations metonymically recall primary signifiers (those for which they have provided substitution).

In the Lacanian world, the cultural signifiers, for example, which are invested with desire (a luxury car perhaps) only have currency because they are linked with earlier images invested with primary energy. They are signifiers which the individual has been forced to adopt in order to speak his desire in a respectable way. Because the links to early imaginary signifiers are unconscious, the individual mistakes the signifiers he is forced to adopt for his own needs, resulting in desire. Therefore the individual seeks to gain recognition by aligning himself with these signifiers as much as possible.

Lacan sees the individual seeking the primordial signifier of another language (the imaginary) in his objects, such as his social positions or even lovers, “eternally stretching forth towards the *desire for something else* - of metonymy” (Lacan, “Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 167). The primary signifiers, displaced by the metaphorical movement of subsequent signification, constitute the unconscious in the subject.

What attaches conscious signifiers to their unconscious counterparts are “signifying chains”, exactly like those Lacan describes operating in conscious language (157). Indeed it seems that the series of symbolic signifiers we have historically used to depict imaginary experience are “suspended” (154) above the terms in which we now speak. Not only does the entire unconscious behave according to the laws of signification, but it also has a symbolic dimension, recoverable in language.

The therapist needs to approach the frontier between the ineffable imaginary and the symbolic, uncovering the points where imaginary signifiers took like determinate symbolic representations. It is here that the psychotic’s chain has “snagged, ...similar in...strangeness to the faces of actors when a film is suddenly stopped in mid action” (Lacan, “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”, 17); and the sign, imaginary signified and symbolic signifier, have become “stabilised in a delusional metaphor” (Lacan, “On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis”, 217). In order to avoid pathological symptoms the subject needs to continue freely with the substitution of signifiers, thereby ensuring that the world is filled with objects of interest. The metaphorical process needs to continue unabated.

This process of substitution still, however, finds the subject located in an innate paranoia, however, as the images which initiated these chains are nothing but signifiers, and it is “paranoiac knowledge” that allowed everyone to misrecognise these as “concrete” (Lacan, “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”, 11). For all of us, then, images form the basis of reality:

After the repeated failures of classical psychology to account for these mental phenomena, which, using a term whose expressive value is confirmed by all semantic acceptations, we call images, psychoanalysis made the first successful attempt to operate at the level of the concrete reality that they represent. This was because it set out from their formative function in the subject. (Lacan, “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”, 11)

Extending the scope of his thesis then, Lacan concludes, “paranoiac knowledge is shown, therefore, to correspond...to certain critical moments that mark the history of man’s mental genesis, each representing a stage in objectifying identification” (17).

Furthermore he indicates that the belief in a unique identity is a paranoid one. The ego is that organ of perception which unwittingly discovers in reality the traces of its own imaginary formation. It is, however, saved from full-blown paranoid pathology by the mechanism of metaphor. The meaning of metaphor is contained neither in the signifier which is displaced nor in the one which replaces it. The new signification (the metaphor) contains the dialectic which suspends meaning between the two signifiers. This results in an ambiguity capable of sustaining desire, but which does not restrict the “polyvalence of man’s symbols”. Symbolic signifiers can provide a degree of satisfaction precisely because they both displace the imaginary signifiers (prohibited to consciousness) and recall them, the “double-triggered mechanism of metaphor” (Lacan, “Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 166). If this reminds one of Freud’s description concerning the function of symptoms, it is no accident. The ego, while seeking to make itself “identical to...subjectivity, which is mediated through language” (Lemaire, 237), retains the security of knowing that it is not the same as this subjectivity.

The difference between the paranoiac and the non-pathological subject is that for the paranoiac conscious (symbolic) discourse will retain the formative effects of imaginary signifiers. Not undergoing repression, these images remain “reality”, even in their subsequent symbolic disguise. The delusions experienced by the paranoiac subject are the acting out of imaginary processes in the real without the buffer of shifting metaphor.

What he [the psychotic] has lost, it seems, is the power of mapping external reality which we exert by placing that reality on a symbolic “background.” This is in effect the loss of the ability to intentionalize reality; the psychotic is simply too close to it. (Wilden, “Lacan and the Discourse of the Other”, 282)

The ego itself, however, provides for paranoiac fixation in the “normal” subject. The conviction of a united identity is delusional for Lacan. That the notion of the unique and integrated “I” has become the fetish of the late twentieth century seems almost indisputable, for it has become that “very suspension-point of the signifying chain where the memory screen is immobilized and the fascinating image of the fetish is petrified” (Lacan, “Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 167). The subject will always feel the force of this signifier of ideal unity. Thus to understand the frozen chain of the paranoiac it is enough to reflect on our own conviction in our individuality.

In following the signifying chain into the primary language, Lacan attempts to identify the primary signifiers in the life of the human child, including that image of unity which haunts the human subject. It is Bowie’s metaphor in describing Lacan’s ambition

which seems most accurate here: “a baroque ceiling painter who has laboured hard upon the *trompe-l’oeil* porticoes, pilasters and cornices that surround his central vault,” and now needs to “populate his sky” (Bowie, 43). These figures form Lacan’s vocabulary of images and are those which arrest the reality of the paranoiac, thus hinting at an affinity, deliberately played up, between psychoanalyst and psychotic.

These are his very own metaphorical representations of the signifiers which order the “unsignifiable” origin (the Real). Just as Freud did before him, he must give his signs the status of reality, so that they can bear his desire.

The Real, as opposed to the real, is, for Lacan, “in the case of the subject, for instance, the organism and its biological needs” (Sheridan, “Translator’s note”, x). This is a state which can never be conceived of without the mediation of the two orders which “the organism” has undergone, namely the imaginary and the symbolic, in order to become the subject. The symbolic, and the real it oversees, then becomes a representation (metaphor) of this primordial state, in which it is barely recognisable, but which offers us the best opportunity of divining origin.

Lacan’s hypothesis depends on his analysis of the human desire as one for unity and autonomy. This is confirmed in his assumption that “the organism” originally exists in “an organic insufficiency in...natural reality” (Lacan, “The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience”, 1).

The child lost in “organic disarray” confronts a spectre of a unified, co-ordinated self in the mirror of others, or literally, his own reflection. This forms an image of an ideal (an imaginary signifier already invoking rivalry) out of which, accompanied by subsequent identifications with others, the child will eventually construct an identity. Lacan describes the infant’s relation to the ideal as “erotic”, signalling that it is a “narcissistic passion” (Lacan, “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis, 19), which drives the child to inhabit this fiction. This desire is then, at heart, a homosexual (same-sex) one. Due to the presence of the mother as an original point of identification, however, this homosexual desire is often experienced as transsexual for male children.

It is through the mother, initially the most prominent representative of ambivalent otherness, that the child originally tries to formulate self. A mother’s discourse is no different in terms of the division between signifiers and the imaginary they seek to represent, the division which is the source of desire. The child will seek to reply to the mother in her own language, translating his own needs into it so that they will be recognised. The child will also, in its fierce need to unite with the m(other) in an act of

identification, want to answer her desire. In order to do so he must become the lost object which her signifiers imply. These signifiers are originally imaginary (the realm of the interaction between mother and child). As Althusser asserts, however, the imaginary “is marked and structured in its dialectic by the dialectic of the Symbolic Order itself”:

...by the dialectic of the human Order, of the human norm (the norms of the temporal rhythms of feeding, hygiene, behaviour, of the concrete attitudes of recognition – the child’s acceptance, rejection, yes and no being merely the small change, the empirical modalities of this constitutive Order, the Order of Law and of the Right of attributory or exclusory assignment), in the form of the Order of the signifier itself, i.e., in the form of an Order formally identical³ with the order of language. (194)

The child attempts to gain subjectivity in the mother’s divided discourse. His being thus comes to incorporate this irreconcilable divide between signifiers and the object that is desired. His attempt to be the lost object is at the same time, in essence, an attempt to reconcile the signifier with the object. Not only are the child’s needs alien to him once translated into the mother’s discourse, but he can discern that the mother’s desire is one that seeks for a lost object.

Clinical experience has shown us that this test of desire of the Other is decisive not in the sense that the subject learns by it whether or not he has the real phallus⁴, but in the sense that he learns that the mother does not have it. (Lacan, “The signification of the phallus”, 289)

The mother is already immersed in the symbolic order. This is the order of language and of the law and it is in her obedience to the figure of the law that she introduces the child to the symbolic order. This is effected in her compliance with the demand that she not participate in the child’s demand to be at one with her. In this way she unconsciously symbolises the imaginary object of her desire as the phallus. In truth

³ Althusser also adds a footnote to his use of “formally identical”, wherein he demonstrates the materiality of the laws of the signifier in the way they structure “kinship” and societal “function” (194). This is supported by Lacan’s assertion that “elementary structures of culture...reveal an ordering of possible exchanges which, even if unconscious, is inconceivable outside the permutations of language” (Lacan, “Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 148). See a discussion regarding the materiality of language in section V.

⁴ The lost object will be signified as the “phallus”, according to Lacan. Lacan defines the phallus as “not a question of form, or of an image, or of a phantasy, but rather of a signifier, the signifier of desire” (Wilden, “Lacan and the Discourse of the Other”, 187). Thus the phallus is not the penis but how the other designates desire. The “phallus” as a symbol operates to induct the subject into a symbolic mode of expression. As with the phallus, all symbols will be signifiers that the subject adopts in the discourse of others to gain recognition and thereby articulate desire. Yet in this adoption, desire is already alienated. The phallus is thus the original symbol which exiles need but enables recognition and exchange: “...the subject enters the game as the dummy, but...he must take up the suit that he may bid” (Lacan. “On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis”, 196).

it is an unsignified space, but her own accession to the symbolic order has fixed its signification as the phallus. It is signified as such because the law of the symbolic order, which provides this signification, privileges the attribution of a phallus in establishing sexual division. This division in turn establishes identity through encouraging identification with a same-sex ideal. The mother's participation in the symbolic order, and obedience to it, precipitates the phallus as that with which the child will seek to identify as the lost object. While the object itself is a "lack" in the imaginary, the mother "symbolizes it in the phallus" (Lacan, "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis", 198) by acknowledging the authority of the law which seeks to separate her from the child. The Oedipal event will confirm this signification at the very same moment as it necessitates its "sublimation".

Lacan labels the metaphor, which not only subsumes the lack of being presented to the subject by the lost object of maternal desire, but also signifies it, the Paternal Metaphor. Its role is to substitute the phallus for the lack of object and simultaneously, substitute a symbolic signifier for the phallus. Lacan equates the order of the symbolic with the function of the father. This is by no means the real father, but rather the symbolic father or as Lacan would have it, the Name of the Father. (A "name" because He is the representative of the structures and inhibitions of the law contained in the abstract [symbolic] discourse of culture and language.) For Lacan the notion of "Fatherhood" is a purely abstract phenomenon:

...[T]he attribution of procreation to the father can only be the effect of a pure signifier, of a recognition, not of a real father, but of what religion has taught us to refer to as Name-of –the-Father. Of course, there is no need of a signifier to be a father, any more than to be dead, but without a signifier, no one would ever know anything about either state of being. ("On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis", 199)

Ironically enough, it is only the mother who can introduce the child to the symbolic, as it is only through her mediation and submission that the child accepts the authority of the law. Symbolic discourse confirms the divided subjectivity of the child in the line of its metaphor, and thereby initiates the unconscious as we experience it, "a haunted memory code" (Lemaire, 200).

The child realises upon the encounter with the symbolic "father" that the lost object is the phallus and that the mother does not possess it. These realisations call into being the threat of castration for the child. This threat comes from an ego ideal, which is the psychic imprint of the encounter with the symbolic father. The child must surrender

the signifier of lack in order to move on to the symbolic order, through identification with this ideal ego. This is a definitive step in the chain of identification which will see the narcissistic pleasure of the mirror image become the “alienating armour” of the ego in a engendered social identity and a discursive subjectivity.

The desire to be the phallus which is lacking in the mother, the desire for union with the mother, is repressed and replaced by a substitute which names it and at the same time transforms it: the symbol...the Name-of-the-Father. (Lemaire, 87)

The successful conclusion to the Oedipal event sees the child losing sight of its imaginary experience, by accepting the symbolic castration which is the separation from the mother. It embraces the law and adopts an identity formed from identifications with the ego-ideal. The rivalry with the ego-ideal is transcended in the realm where the child becomes either a man or a woman. The signifiers formed in the imaginary, however, are re-articulated (according to metaphoric substitution) in order to sustain desire in the new order. The ego-ideal, for example, becomes numerous ideal-egos, inaugurating a process of identification and rivalry with social ideals. This is something we can observe within contemporary experience in the guise of “role models” upheld in society.

The paternal metaphor is powerful precisely because it is a metaphor which can free the child from a realm where the signifiers are taken to be real: “it comes to inhabit ‘the universe of things said’ and is freed from its embeddedness in the world of action and impulse” (Wright, 100).

The symbolic, as much as it threatens the ideal world constructed in the imaginary, can also be said to be “a gift from the parent to the child that opens the world to him” (103). As one recalls, the metaphor substitutes a signifier for a “lack” acutely felt by the child; “The meaning that emerges could be seen, therefore, as a beneficent satisfaction, a kind of ‘grace’, granted to those who have fulfilled the rigorous and limiting injunctions (parental demands)” (104). Lacan, to whose system Wright is not directly referring, would temper such optimism by reasserting the alienation which this entails.

The paranoiac has shut down this metaphor at the very point when it was about to come into being, or has later been drawn back into its realm where signifiers are taken for the real. In submitting to Wright’s “regressive pull towards an object-action framework”, he rejects the “gift” of abstraction.

Paranoiac encounters are those in which the subject misrecognises the imaginary as the real. Such encounters do, however, actually go to compose the personality for Lacan, such as those between the subject and the mirror-ideal, and those

between the subject and the ego-ideal. It is important to recall that the ego-ideal is a function which will be performed by successive images, each shaping the social identity the child will eventually adopt as “concrete” reality. It is also vital to realise that both the mirror-ideal and the ego-ideal are experiences of ambiguous otherness, experiences in which the subject has both identified narcissistically with the “image” and rivalled it aggressively. The paranoiac will live the ego-ideal in its imaginary ambiguity: as both identity and a threat to narcissistic pleasure. In the subject who has successfully undergone the structuring metaphor of the Oedipal event, they will form an unconscious chain of signification, present only in the “unreality” of substitution.

Instead the clinical paranoiac’s metaphorical capacity has broken down and become fixated to component elements, a result anticipated by Freud’s description of the failure of condensation in paranoia (Lacan, in turn, equates metaphor with this dream mechanism): “Paranoia decomposes...paranoia resolves once more into their elements the products of the condensations and identifications which are effected in the unconscious” (Freud, “Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia”, 185).

The series of imaginary forms, which constitute identity, are re-activated in paranoia. These are also unconsciously (metaphorically and metonymically) reflected in everyday experience, but the efficacy of the symbolic has ensured “that the root structures of the metaphor [paternal] are caught up and bound and the possibility of their independent expression is greatly reduced” (Wright, 105). Paranoia then represents a primary systematisation of the subject, a systematisation shared, even if not consciously, by non-paranoiac subjects. These are shared to the extent that Lacan reflects, as he did in his thesis, that social factors, in their capacity as representations of the primary organisation, can initiate a return to the original structures.

Let it be noted in passing that it would be worthwhile mapping the places in social space that our culture has assigned to these subjects [paranoid psychotics], especially as regards their assignment to the social services relating to language, for it is not unlikely that there is at work here one of the factors that consign such subjects to the effects of the breakdown produced by the symbolic discordances that characterize the complex structures of civilization. (Lacan, “Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis”, 69)

Here, however, he is providing evidence of the effectual materiality of discourse. Whereas in his thesis it was the social standing and physical treatment of the subject which resulted in paranoiac modes, it is now the “symbolic discordances”. Those who operate at levels of discourse which do not allow for the satisfying illusion of unity in

subjectivity, are compromised in their symbolic capacity. The law has been undermined and the field of desire it vouchsafed closes.

The paranoiac has rejected the authority of the law and seeks to evade the emasculating metaphor which will ensure his respectable desire. His reality is that of the unity of object and signifier, identity and subjectivity. Essentially what the psychotic has excluded includes his intuitive knowledge of language's essential arbitrariness. The dialectic between the imaginary and the symbolic is the key and is what, according to Lacan, the psychotic has lost. Wilden quotes Lacan in a summary of his doctoral thesis: "...it is worth adding that if a man who believes he's a king is mad, a king who believes he's a king is no less so" (Wilden, "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other", 129). The Paternal Metaphor, which ought to have repressed earlier signification resulting in the world of desirable and substitutable objects, and an ego which would have misrecognised them as such, has been "foreclosed". Instead the subject is immersed once again in the imaginary drama of narcissistic identification (often transsexual), aggressive rivalry and potential castration, all experienced as reality.

The figures of these processes are Lacanian archetypes: all the images of the child's course into the symbolic will be repeated in this order which bars the child from those very images. Normally, however, the representations will be fluid, that is ambiguous, which means that they cannot only contain unconscious intention but can also thereby make the world the subject of desire. Symbols are then neither internal nor external but exist as a means of communication between both worlds, bound by this necessity never to present either adequately.

IV. Paranoid Narratives

The tale of the paranoid is not a foreign one to us, but one that has been, fortunately, defamiliarised through the agency of metaphor. Like a Platonic picture show, non-psychotic subjects will see their imaginary signifiers projected before them, mostly in perception or repetition. Slips of the tongue and dreams show that the discourse in which we have inscribed our history remembers us, even if we do not recall it. These are moments when imaginary intention intersects with the symbolic and achieves recognition:

...[In delusions] we recognize the symbols of the unconscious in petrified forms that find their place in a natural history of these symbols beside the embalmed forms in which myths are presented in our story-books. (Lacan, "Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis", 69)

For the paranoid myths of origin are equated with their symbols and are read as reality. These processes which lead to the formation of identity will always, however, be represented, even in everyday perceptions, just as myths will always be re-articulated for different generations.

The non-psychotic will carry a peripheral awareness of the fundamental inconsequentiality of what he sees before him at the same time as he invests himself in, and responds to, the reflected images. The psychotic realises in reality that “I is another” (Lacan, “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”, 23), as she struggles to identify with others to gain identity. The non-psychotic’s ego, in its conviction of its autonomy, asserts that “I am nothing of what happens to me. You are nothing of value” (20). The non-psychotic subject lives the dialectic of metaphor, the ego being that which bars the entry of imaginary signifiers (becoming the signified) into symbolic ones. It “deludes” subjects into believing their “true place” is between the two (imaginary and symbolic) – the projector and the cave-wall. This Lacan points out “is nowhere. Was nowhere, that is, until Freud discovered it; for if what Freud discovered isn’t that, it isn’t anything” (Lacan, “Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 166).

The symbolic and the imaginary have been collapsed in the psychotic. This results in an astonishing effect. Firstly, the often neologistic language the psychotic uses to describe his reality will seem to influence that very reality. As with Aimée, it will often prefigure relations or actions. Secondly, the language the psychotic uses will seem to him to miraculously arise from the reality without him. This, for Lacan repeats the process by which we are all inducted into signification. Language predates our insertion into it, meaning that that which structures our reality is eccentric to us.

Psychotic discourse dramatises the mechanical, imposed nature of language, its referential and repetitious qualities. It also reveals its intuitive, that is its creative or transformational character. (Lemaire, 205)

The systematisation encountered in the imaginary is present in the delusion presented to the paranoid subject’s faculty of perception. This imaginary ordering is precisely what paranoid language attempts to describe. The paranoid subject will often create neologisms to explain the process which, in the non-psychotic subject, has led to the supremacy of the symbolic order through the Oedipal metaphor. The psychotic delusion is at once both a substitute for and a representation of this process in the paranoid subject. The delusion is thus a fixed symbolism that manifests the imaginary in the real. The paranoid’s signifiers, however, are determined by the very systematisation

they are intended to account for. This means that the form of imaginary can be located in the descriptive terms invented and employed by the paranoid. This leads to an instance where psychotic reality mimics its terms. Psychotic language seems to arise from an interpretation of the delusional phenomena, but these phenomena are already a result of the obsessive signification which the paranoid's terms testify to.

Often paranoid discourse will appropriate terms from established discourses which not only reflect the imaginary system directly, but do so with the sanction of the law. One favoured example is the discourse of religion, with its metaphorical representations of the ego-ideal and castration complex: factors which led the surrealist Louis Aragon to remark, "Thus every perverted power finds in the Church a use which spares the world the breath of scandal⁵" (quoted in Nadeau, 148).

Just as the psychotic will attempt to piece together an identity from various identifications, experienced as miraculous transformations, so too will the code used to represent these be pieced together from pre-existing symbolic discourse. If it seems a case of dialogue and play between two orders of signification, determined outside the subject, it is because this is precisely what it is: "For Lacan, then, the unconscious is more 'outside' than within, a consequence of 'the discourse of the Other', an inter-verbal murmuring which goes on, in a way, in spite of and not because of us" (Bunyan, 54).

The psychotic has collapsed the unconscious into the conscious or, more specifically, the decisive function that would have enabled the split between the two was never effectively concluded. It is the threat of this disempowering split, experienced as a physical threat, which the subject will attempt to avoid in how he answers the code: "The bravery he shows in not faltering in his reply, in even thwarting the traps laid for him, is not the least important aspect for our analysis of the phenomenon" (Lacan, "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis", 186).

Psychoanalysis in many ways is the *via negativa*; it conceives of the processes which formulate human identity by examining examples of pathology, those which are discordant with society. The Oedipal triangle was identified, Lacan points out (Lacan, "Aggressivity in psychoanalysis", 25), only by cases which presented the "failures to resolve it". The psychotic shares his origins with the non-psychotic: "Not only can man's being not be understood without madness, it would not be man's being if it did not bear

⁵ "The various images of Jesus, from the little underpants on the cross to the unbelievable Sacred Heart, all the martyrs, etc. – what pickings for the sadists. For masochists, the sufferings of hellfire, threats, and the whip actually permitted. For scapular fetishists, relics, Mary's garters, saints' slippers...How many virgins for Lesbos, Saint Sebastians for Sodom!" (quoted in Nadeau, 148).

madness within itself as the limit of his freedom” (Lacan, “On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis”, 215). In this way delusional interpretative structures become a text in which to read the “myths in our storybooks”, or a film in which a paused scene can be studied in greater detail than when it whizzes past in a public cinema. Whether fixed or fluid, however, it seems that the narrative remains to a greater or lesser extent paranoid: “Psychotic truth refers...to the importance of language and the Oedipal Law in structuring normal discourse” (Lemaire, 200).

What then of the difference between the narrative of the lunatic and the psychoanalytic theorist? Is psychoanalysis itself a paranoid narrative? This is a possibility which occurred even to Freud. In his analysis of a case of paranoia, he remarks on how accurate the patient’s delusion (although highly metaphorical and quasi-poetical) was in articulating the origins of his condition.

[D]etails of Schreber’s⁶ delusional structures sound almost like endopsychic perceptions of the processes whose existence I have assumed in these pages as the basis of our explanation of paranoia....It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber’s delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe. (Freud, “Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia, 218).

Psychoanalysis is certainly a meta-narrative of the formative structures of subjectivity in the individual. It employs neologisms and constructions (often derived from pre-established discourse) to which it lends phenomenological status. If it is paranoia, it is a privileged paranoia, now receiving, in some forms, the sanction of the law. Furthermore it seems to be a code which, apparently derived from reality, attempts to structure that reality. A “delusional metaphor” perhaps, but “only” a metaphor for that which is unknowable unless it is spoken, making it, in the same breath, unrecognisable. Clément reminds one,

Both the madman and the prophet invent a language of their own. Innovators, they do violence to grammar, to words, to the substance of language. But the prophet stands on the edge of intelligibility, at the place where his linguistic innovations can still be understood by the group. (56)

In the post-script to his lecture, “On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis”, Lacan offers a word of warning to analysts, Virginia Woolf’s guardians of “proportion”

⁶ For a discussion of this case, see the Appendix.

(159), in commenting on the psychosis of everyday society,

That such a psychosis may prove to be compatible with what is called good order is not in question, but neither does it authorise the psychiatrist, even if he is a psychoanalyst, to trust to his own compatibility with that order to the extent of believing that he is in possession of an adequate idea of the reality to which the patient appears to be unequal.

(216)

V. Only a metaphor

In Freud's effort to erase the mind/body opposition, he reversed the situation, making body (sex) the condition of mind. It is worth suggesting that, in its own way, Freud's biologism is as materialist as Marx's dialectical materialism...Lacan transcends these dichotomies by uncovering a paradox that erases the materialist oppositions between mind and body without requiring that he grant priority to either philosophy or biology. By making thought a derivative of the effects of language and associational networks of representation, by placing Desire at the heart of meaning, by making the primary ego a sensory structure inseparable from corporal experience, by showing the secondary or narcissistic ego as commensurate with other-oriented relationships, Lacan has libidinalized philosophy and theology and ontologized biology.

(Ragland-Sullivan, 97)

Lemaire characterises Lacan's insistence on the "real" effects of the signifier as a "setting straight" of the record: "The problem does not lie in whether language or thought comes first, then, but in the fact that they were ever separated from each other and from identity" (205).

The material effects of the signifier are obvious insofar as they structure the ego, the agency which in turn lends "corporal experience" its form. Furthermore, Lacan asserts that the "elementary structures of culture...reveal an ordering of possible exchanges which, even if unconscious, is inconceivable outside the permutations of language" (Lacan, "Agency of the letter in the unconscious", 148). He views culture as deriving its forms from language and, in this respect, goes so far as to equate the two. The ramifications of this assertion are something Lacan places outside of his "scientific investigation", but does offer the parting footnote:

We may recall the discussion of the need for a new language in communist society did in fact take place, and Stalin, much to the relief of those who adhered to his philosophy, put an end to it with the following formulation: language is not a superstructure. (Lacan, "Agency of the letter in the unconscious", 176)

The laws of the signifier structure identity through the agency of culture. This is possible because the signifier has had a fundamental structural effect on the formation, functions, and proliferation of such culture. Indeed it may well be asked whether or not culture

could have existed without the order of signification and the community it provides for. This means that one must be prepared to find the dialectical movement implied by metaphor and metonymy in cultural forms.

Lacan's theory indicates a dialectic in the way in which the symbolic in the Oedipal metaphor negates the imaginary (following the movement identified by Freud in both symptoms and sublimation). The Oedipal event appears to resolve disparate identifications, subsuming them under the deceit of a coherent identity. The apparent "*aufhebung*" (Lacan, "The signification of the phallus", 288) brought about by the Oedipal episode allows the subject to invest himself in this identity. Although the conflict between the two orders (imaginary and symbolic) continues, the subject's conviction in the "indoctrinating Aufklärung" (Lacan, "Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis", 55) establishes identity (as we perceive and understand it) as dialectical.

The adult ego is the result of the Oedipal dialectic and resists the dissolution of the "whole" it represents. Despite its attempts at such misrecognition, however, the symbolic identity granted by metaphor remains in conflict with its imaginary origin via the unconscious: "A conflict whose effects Freud made the subject bring to realization through his help before explaining them to us in the dialectic of the Oedipus complex" (55).

The dialectic is confirmed in the extent to which heterosexual desire appears to stand in contradistinction to homosexual – narcissistic – desire. The symbolic will continue to share a "determinate relation" (Wood, 55) with imaginary signifiers, however obscured this relation is by substitution and apparent resolution.

It has become clear in the investigation of paranoia that this psychosis brings the dialectical elements inherent in identity into an overt, real conflict once again. The delusion of the paranoiac must also, however, substitute for the dialectic which brought about the crystallisation of the ego in the normal subject. At the same time as the paranoiac delusion represents the imaginary conflict it is also a "style" or form of resolution (metaphor) in the symbolic. This is precisely that which allies the ego with paranoiac structure. Ironically, the paranoiac's delusion, with all its seemingly open conflict, represents a dialectic which the normal subject can only dream of, while the apparent resolution achieved by the normal subject is, in fact, constant conflict.

It is in paranoia that the mechanisms of signification are laid bare along with their decisive symbolic representation for the patient. In effect a secondary historization has

become bound to a primary one and it is through this fixation that primary structures can be discerned. Paranoia does not give us access to the Real, but in the delusion offers a series of events parallel to those of the imaginary order, the significance of which have not deteriorated due to the impact of symbolic substitution.

Initially welcomed by the Marxists in 1932 as a champion of materialism owing to his consideration of social determinants in psychosis, Lacan went on to equate social structures with those present in linguistics. His theory can be thought of as one of dialectical materialism only insofar as one can consider language as having significant material dimensions. Lacanian theory not only indicates these dimensions, but also bypasses the social and political significance of language and offers a language-driven phenomenology.

However, can one formulate a theory of historical materialism based on Lacanian conceptions? Brennan alerts one to such a possibility, arguing that “Lacan’s theory”

...provides us with a lever (not an elaborated theory of history, not at all) for thinking through the trajectory of modernity. Part of its potential stems from the fact that, while it stresses psychical factors, it does so in a way which makes the psychical into the material, or strictly, a physical force which is at the same time cultural. (7)

Lacan certainly considers the letter and its laws as the determining force of the real, leaving the “material” of the Real unknowable (except possibly in the repetition effected through representation). Jameson, however, argues that very little is to be gained from a superficial comparison of Marxism with psychoanalysis:

To say that both psychoanalysis and Marxism are materialisms is simply to assert that each reveals an area in which human consciousness is not “master in its own house”: only the areas decentered by each are the quite different ones of sexuality and of the class dynamics of social history. (105)

Jameson does not however exclude the materialism of psychoanalysis owing to this consideration.

Materialistic thinking, however, ought to have had enough practice of heterogeneity and discontinuity to entertain the possibility that human reality is fundamentally alienated in more than one way, and in ways that have little to do with each other. (105)

Jameson argues that what would benefit one more than any attempt to combine the ideology of psychoanalysis with that of Marxism is to compare the methodology of the two. He concludes that “Marxism and psychoanalysis indeed present a number of striking analogies of structure with each other, as a checklist of their major themes can

testify...⁷” (106). This may make of Marxism as paranoid a narrative as that of psychoanalysis. Lacan suggests as much when he designates, ironically enough by way of metaphor, Marxism as part of the imaginary order of history. He cites its reliance on the utopian applicability of its terms which surround its societal ideal as evidence of its capture in imaginary signifiers.

For Lacan it is in the theories of history which, by not dealing with “authentic historical research” but with the “so-called laws of history” (Lacan, “Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis”, 51), that the primary historization of the subject is paralleled most effectively. He includes the “edifice of Karl Marx” in his comment that the “role” of these theorists, being “somewhat too slender for scientific progress...lies elsewhere: in their very considerable role as ideals” (51). Then it is as part of an “imaginary” within history that Marxism and its primary metaphor – “the key words of dialectical materialism” – “remain very much alive even under censorship” (52). This signals that the orders of the signifier are to be uncovered here as well.

Marxism is a paranoid metaphor bound to the representation of primary structures, these terms being experienced as real relations and named neologically. It also functions, in turn, as part of an imaginary order itself within the structure of history.

Although it is a paranoid metaphor, and therefore one with material results, Marxism remains as much a metaphor as psychoanalysis itself, something Jameson recognises,

In terms of language, we must distinguish between our own narrative of history – whether psychoanalytic or political – and the Real itself, which our narratives can only approximate in asymptotic fashion and which “resists symbolization absolutely”. Nor can the historical paradigm furnished us by psychoanalysis or Marxism – that of the Oedipus complex or of the class struggle – be considered as anything more Real than a master text, an abstract one, hardly even a protonarrative, in terms of which we construct the text of our own lives with our own concrete praxis. (107)

The process represented by Lacan (and Freud) is in truth only a metaphor – paranoiacally - bound to the representation of imaginary structures and, through these, it gestures at the Real. Metaphor is, however, the only way in which to signify that which can only enter language through negation. Lacan’s theory does not escape the

⁷ “...: the relation of theory and practice; the resistance of false consciousness and the problem as to its opposite (is it knowledge or truth? Science or individual certainty?); the role and risks of the concept of a ‘midwife’ of truth, whether analyst or vanguard party; the reappropriation of an alienated history and the function of narrative; the question of desire and value and of the nature of ‘false desire’; the paradox of the

alienating effects of the signifier which it strives to represent; his language cannot miraculously accomplish that which he places outside the capability of language.

Yet Lacan's "paranoia" is not uncritical. There seems to be awareness in his writing that his metaphors are just that. Perhaps this is because, as Jameson suggests,

A materialist philosophy of language reserves a status for scientific language of this kind, which designates the Real without claiming to coincide with it, which offers the very theory of its own incapacity to signify fully as its credentials for transcending both Imaginary and Symbolic alike. (95)

This language must then be one that both paranoiacally traces the imaginary, and through this attempts to figure the Real, and at the same time to carry the awareness that its representations are delusional metaphors. In it the dialectic between the imaginary and the symbolic must be made explicit, where the author confronts language, personally, as that which assures recognition but alienates "truth". This text must resist succumbing to the illusions of its own paranoia. It must escape the petrifying capture of paranoia while engaging in its forms. It has to escape conventional meaning (often guarded with paranoiac certainty) as well as evade the lure of the imaginary. The first would see Lacan's intentions hi-jacked and "emasculated", while the second would mean that he would be unable to reflect critically on the illusory nature of his own signifiers, making of him the very worst kind of lunatic fundamentalist.

It has been suggested that Lacan's use of language may itself be, in mimesis, the signifier of his theory - like psychoanalysis itself, "its play of system on system and delusion upon delusion is the closest approximation to truth that human beings can expect to achieve" (Bowie, 40). His style brings the reader to a conscious awareness of the inability of the symbolic to offer any satisfying object due to its need to ensure manifold desire. Barthes demonstrates this liberating (and in Lacan, also emasculating) nature of the symbolic in his "Death of the Author":

In precisely this way literature (it would be better from now on to say *writing*) by refusing to assign a "secret", an ultimate meaning, to the text (and the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law. (171)

The survival of the interpretative critic seems to indicate that Barthes' call for such recognition has largely gone unheeded, otherwise all critics would have been diagnosed paranoiac by legions of Lacanian analysts. Writing which actively defies definition is the

end of the revolutionary process, which, like analysis, must surely be considered 'interminable' rather than 'terminable'; and so forth" (Jameson, 106).

equivalent of the speech of the analyst, which activates paranoid mechanisms in the patient, in order to gain access to, or create awareness of, a primary language and organisation. According to Bowie, “Psychoanalysis is a ‘critical’ interpretative system that seeks to reduplicate and modulate the subject’s original delirium” (40).

The mission of psychoanalysis, then, is to access the imaginary signification and to protect this “developmental space against its premature closure” (Wright, 108). To access this is to potentially manipulate the subject’s fundamental formations. One can only approach these “origins”, if one can read (and for Wright, decompose) the dialectic which the patient’s metaphors represent.

To efface “oneself” (an instance of social paranoia) at the intersection of the two orders of the signifier, the imaginary and the symbolic, is to allow again for determinate interplay between the two. This will occur in everyday experience, but the necessity of identity will distance the subject far enough from ideal signifiers so that they do not become inescapable in the symbolic. Simultaneously the ego will fix its gaze firmly on the symbolic, providing the illusion of a dialectic in order to allow the subject his attempt to ignore any disruptive subversion of his reality.

To trace the history of signification, even into the unconscious, is to deconstruct a “linguistic process”. Yet, even if one were able to approach the primary signification, one could still have no guarantee that it could give one a clue to origins. However, the only chance, and it is a poor one, of discerning origins is to rely on reading the dialectic within the metaphor which these imaginary signifiers must also constitute (here the imaginary has displaced the Real). In this way one repeats the method by which one critically reads this dialectic in the symbolic. Structure therefore becomes the overwhelming archetype in Lacanian theory, and it is a dialectical structure made up of metaphor and metonymy.

In insisting on a meaning to a text which blatantly resists it, or more radically, one that resists any meaning, is to demonstrate the insistence of an imaginary (unconscious) discourse, and is paranoid. This, however, becomes the only “authentic” means of interacting with a text.

Only by grasping images – and also the surviving fragments of authentic myth and delusion – in this way, as that trace of the Imaginary, of sheer private or physiological experience which has undergone the sea-change of the Symbolic, can criticism of this kind [image study] recover a vital and hermeneutic relationship to the text. (Jameson, 99)

It seems then that certain texts are able to break beneath the veneer of the symbolic in purposefully defying the conventions of meaning. In actively defying the law these texts

demonstrate the paranoiac impulse to return to the imaginary: to find syntax better suited to expressing the desire articulated in the unconscious.

Surrealist writing is one of the major examples of such literature, although both Lacan and Barthes indicate that it misconceived its project. Barthes does so because he asserts that surrealists were not destroying the code of language – “a direct subversion of codes” - as they conceived of their activity, but were merely “playing” the code “off” against itself. This explains why their writing was not reduced to gibberish.

Surrealism, though unable to accord language a supreme place..., contributed to the desacrilization (sic) of the Author by ceaselessly recommending the abrupt disappointment of expectations (the famous surrealist ‘jolt’), by entrusting the hand with the task of writing as quickly as possible what the head itself is unaware of (automatic writing), by accepting the principle and the experience of several people writing together. (169)

Lacan echoes Barthes’ objection when he describes the “doctrine behind” automatic writing as “false” (Lacan, “Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 157).

The creative spark of metaphor does not spring from the presentation of two images, that is, of two signifiers equally actualized. It flashes between two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) connexion with the rest of the chain. (157)

He points out that the dialectic of metaphor is one in which one signifier “represses” another, and that this is responsible for the “creative spark of metaphor”. It is “at the precise point at which sense emerges from nonsense” that “we realise that man defies his very destiny when he derides the signifier” (158). For Lacan, collapsing symbolic conventions is to eventually subvert our identity, which is also a “symbolic convention”, and so defy our social “destiny” with the power of the imaginary, which may in turn recall the threat of non-being. “Radical Metaphors” which highlight the arbitrariness – almost absurd nature - of language act as a catalyst which can prompt one to begin tracing those metonymic chains with which one unconsciously evades “the obstacles of social censure”(158).

That the surrealist metaphor was not an eradication of meaning, as the contradiction of two equal terms would imply, but an evocation, shows that the unconscious is not beyond the “permutations of language”. It also shows the symbolic (at its most superficial level) to be insubstantial, inviting sense at the very moment when it derides its conventions. Yet the symbolic returns when one realises that the reason

sense emerges is precisely because one has not escaped the code, merely having moved to another level.

To invoke the unconscious, as the surrealists did in their automatic writing, is not to destroy the code, but merely to play the two orders of the signifier (the imaginary and the symbolic) off against each other. In doing this they undermine the position of the ego at the place where it attempts to maintain the symbolic “armour” (Lacan, “Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”, 17) of identity, by resisting to look over its shoulder at that which underlies its own construction.

This play then is that which reveals both the imaginary dimensions of the symbolic and, in doing so, addresses the question of being to the ego itself. The reader along with the author begins to dissolve in folds of shifting subjectivity, pushing the ego to assert itself paranoiacally (yet unconsciously) in determining concrete meaning, or allow the subject to be caught in chains in which signifiers take on the formative shapes of the imaginary.

The kind of image-criticism promoted by Jameson is precisely the capture of such shapes. The danger of this kind of reading is that one may become imprisoned by their power to “absolutize” themselves and “overshadow the perceptual process” (100). A demonstration of such a criticism, its historical possibilities, and its inherent dangers, are all to be found in the writing of another Marxist philosopher, Walter Benjamin. Benjamin praised the surrealists in an essay in 1929, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligentsia”, referring to them as the “adoptive children of revolution” (72). His work not only closely resembles Lacan’s conception of the material effects of the signifier brought about by a primary signification, but also, strangely, Dr. Schreber’s delusional narrative.

Benjamin believed that there was a “first language...the bonding element between every aspect of the universe”, and that this “original language of names was a mimetic response to nature” (Jennings, 117). This then was a realm where the word and the thing were one, “the absolute relationship of the name to knowledge rests solely in God, only there is the name, because it is in its essence identical to the creative word, the pure medium of knowledge” (Benjamin, “On Language as Such and on the Language of Man”, 115). Yet, according to Benjamin’s ideas, “[o]ur relationship to nature has not been so much severed as rendered unconscious” (Jennings, 117). This means that the truth can still be discerned, even within that language of everyday which has made of the original language one that is “mediate” and invested it with “multiplicity”

resulting in “linguistic confusion” (Benjamin, “On Language as Such and on the Language of Man”, 120).

Despite his contention that language in its historical form serves as the sign and measure of human alienation, Benjamin nonetheless insists on the continued presence in language of a “weak messianic power”. If truth is resident in the world, if human beings remain capable of a higher form of experience, then it is language alone that bears within it the potential to realise this. (Jennings, 114)

The existence of the “essence of the past” (114) in contemporary signifiers allows one to again access such a past in moments of heightened awareness. Jennings quotes Benjamin in describing these flashes: “They offer themselves to the eye just as fleetingly and transitorily as an astral constellation” (118). They are the irruption in which the “dialectical images” which make up the fabric of language are exposed: “Dialectical images are bursts of recognition which, in revealing knowledge of a better world and a better time may precipitate revolution” (119).

It is here that the imaginary “absolutizes itself”, leaving one only with the impression of its illusion of unity. It is the awareness of these images (and the ideal unity they impress upon one) which can precipitate an overthrow of the established order, maintained by a “false” and misleading language. In order to access these images it is important to learn to read everyday texts in a particular way. Although unsustainable as a means to this end, Benjamin indicates that one can discover this method of interpretation through “hashish, opium, or whatever else can give an introductory lesson” (Benjamin, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligentsia”, 71). Yet it is ultimately as determined readers of the symbolic unconscious (the history of signs) that one can achieve these moments of what Benjamin terms “profane illumination”⁸ (71), profane because of the irreverence they express for the established order of symbolic expression.

Reading emerges...as a powerful anecdote to those other forms of experience [mystical] privileged by Benjamin but available only to a limited group: the experience of the child, the insane, the intoxicated. In the act of reading we

⁸ An example of such a moment of “illumination” is quoted by Jennings from Benjamin’s *Das Passagen-Werk*, “There is in Belleville the place du Maroc: this inconsolable heap of rock with its tenements became for me, as I happened upon it on a Sunday afternoon, not only Moroccan desert but in addition and at the same time a monument of colonial imperialism; the topographical vision was intertwined there with an allegorical meaning, yet it didn’t lose its place at the heart of Belleville. The awakening of an intuition like this is usually reserved for intoxicants. And indeed street names are in cases like this intoxicants, which expand our perception into new spheres and make it multilayered. One might call the power, with which they put us in this sort of condition, their *vertu évocatrice* – but this says too little for it isn’t the association but rather the interpretation that is decisive here” (120). It is worth bearing this “reading” in mind when one examines Dali’s descriptions of his paranoiac process of artistic creation.

regain some sense of the power that is packed into certain names, we perceive the density and complexity of realms which can be entwined in names. (Jennings, 120)

Benjamin credited the surrealists with the pessimism profane enough to enact a “loosening of self. This loosening of the self by intoxication is, at the same time, precisely the fruitful, living experience that allowed these people to step outside the domain of intoxication” (Benjamin, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligentsia”, 71). The “domain of intoxication” was everyday existence which both contained and alienated truth: “we penetrate the mystery only to the degree that we recognise it in the everyday world, by virtue of the dialectical optic⁹ that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday” (78).

Through the dream, the early Surrealists deprived empirical reality of all its power; they maltreated empirical reality and its purposive rational organization as the mere content of dreams whose language can be only indirectly decoded. By turning the optics of the dream toward the waking world, one could bring to birth the concealed, latent thoughts slumbering in the world’s womb. (Tiedemann, 933).

In his brand of Marxism, Benjamin equated Capitalist relations with the status of the symbolic order, alienating the historical ideals, which he, however, viewed less as signifiers themselves than the “image-making imagination of a collective unconscious” (Tiedemann, 933). In its “pessimism” (Benjamin, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligentsia”, 79), regarding literature and morality, surrealism, according to Benjamin, led the way to the true revolutionary act in encouraging an awareness of these imaginary ideals.

I believe that Benjamin offers a clear example of critical paranoia, one that also accesses the historical imaginary suggested by Lacan’s analogy. Nonetheless, it still falls shy of the example which Lacan would establish, in that it retains conviction in the ideals of the imaginary. This seems to be the fate of most Marxist critics and critiques, even if they are able to conceive of such a difficulty. Jameson, for example, at the conclusion of his essay on Lacan, writes, “The solution can only lie, it seems to me, in the renewal of Utopian thinking...” (110). The revolutionary it seems must remain paranoid, while the analyst, and any critical theory, must maintain “a certain listening distance...in a fashion more dialectical than ironic” (115).

⁹ Benjamin’s “dialectical optic” is recalled in the function which Lacan assigns the ego as the faculty of perception.

It is interesting also to note that, however unconsciously, Jameson's description of the discourse of the master resembles Lacan's description of the discourse of the paranoiac: "...primacy to the signifier, retreat of subjectivity beneath its bar, producing its knowledge as object, which stands over and against the lost object of desire" (113). The symbolic (order of the signifier) leaves the paranoiac, in place of the lost object, a symbolic (and at the same time real) depiction of that process which in the normal subject would be sublimated. The delusion takes over from where the subject left off in the Oedipal dialectic. This makes identity, and not only subjectivity, radically dependent on the systems of the signifier. The curtain is taken for that which it hides. It is with the conviction, which delusion affords, that Jameson's master can, as Dali puts it: "orient reality" (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 141) around desire.

It will become increasingly apparent how the material aspect of paranoiac interpretation and delusion are essential to the prominence of this "disorder" in the Surrealist movement. It is also of importance to an understanding of Gascoyne, who sought a language in his poetry which would provide compelling imagery, both political and psychological. Paranoiac creation provides a solution here because it comprehends the dialectic of metaphor in both these spheres and asserts the power of the imaginary.

Marxism, like psychoanalysis, "paranoiacally" provided the world with a set of ideal signifiers which expanded the representation of desire. One may only be a metaphor for the other, or for the same process, but if Lacan has not demonstrated the material importance of this, then he has demonstrated nothing: "All knowledge and language have the structure of metaphor, in Lacan's view, in that they stand for something else; and the something else is explained by the structure of metonymy" (Lemaire, 255).

VI. A Preamble to the Tracing of Origins

What follows this chapter is an historical narrative concerning the relationship of Dali with both Lacan and the surrealist movement. It also maintains an awareness of the relationship between psychoanalytically orientated artistic practice and the Marxist revolution, one that will become decisive for Gascoyne. How much of an awareness of paranoid process was present in both Dali and Gascoyne? How self-critical was their paranoia, if this is indeed, according to Lacanian definition, what it was? Could they have been aware of Lacan's formulations at this stage, or even pre-figured them in alternative metaphors?

It is important in view of my coming chapters to reflect that the process of seeking a narrative of “decline and progress”, is to become paranoiacally transfixed in the mirror of the imaginary, “an insatiable desire for wholeness” (Preziosi, 129). What Donald Preziosi says here of the practice of art history is as true of the study of literature. Even the modernist belief that through examining the “synecdochic metaphoricity” (128) of the artwork (here I include the literary text) one can project it “on to a larger screen – the social, cultural, historical, ethnic, racial or national horizon...the horizon of its ideal, projected *fullness*” is part of the “utopian promise” (133) of the imaginary.

The Real remains obstinately outside the realm of the signifier, and so beyond the scope of this thesis. At least in the misguided attempt at a “coherent history” I am not alone. It is the paranoid reaction of mistaking imaginary signifiers for the Real which structures all realities, irrespective of whether or not the subject recognises that he is only repeating these determinate signs. “Human knowledge begins from an illusion – a misapprehension, a deceit, a seduction, an inveiglement - and constructs an inescapable autonomous system in its wake” (Bowie, 40).

It is at the risk of capture in the imaginary desire for “unity” that my enquiry must continue. It is also with the knowledge that even this capture will only ever be expressed to you, the reader, metaphorically, that I attempt the administration of meaning.

Chapter Two

I. Retrospective fantasizing or Paris 1932

Lacan extended definitions within pathology to include far-reaching ontological considerations. Indeed he offers nothing less than an emphasis on the radical eccentricity of human consciousness, in place of an authentic conception of selfhood.

That this has been the legacy of Freud's unconscious is indisputable: "Man torn between his reason – discredited but still arrogant – and an unknown realm which he feels to be the true source of his acts, his thoughts, his life" (Nadeau, 48).

Artistic movements also found in Freud a powerful revolutionary ally in their quest to transfigure contemporary society and discourse:

A Viennese psychiatrist, armed with a dark lantern, seeks to penetrate the dark labyrinth. His discoveries are so horrifying that the bourgeoisie is scandalized. The surrealist doctors follow in the tracks of the Viennese. They, on the contrary are amazed, dazzled by the new treasures they have discovered. (Nadeau, 48)

Roudinesco also remarks on the momentum of the Freudian revolution in turn-of-the-century France: "Writers and artists of all kinds saw dreams as the great adventure of the age: they wanted to use the omnipotence of desire to change mankind" (Roudinesco, 16).

Freud's essential subversion of the assumed rational centre of identity had already paralleled the socio-artistic ambitions of the Dadaist movement (established in Zürich in 1918, arriving in Paris a year later). Yet Freud sought reconciliation between the rational and irrational, whereas the Dadaists sought only the de(con)struction of falsehoods continually perpetuated by the over-confident logos: "Wasn't it better, henceforth, instead of this perpetual merry-go-round, to smash the carousel itself?" (Nadeau, 58).

The disdain for order no doubt contributed to the demise of the Dadaist group: "Its cult of absurdity became more and more extreme and by the end of 1922 it had ceased to exist as a coherent group" (Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 129).

The death of the movement meant that its desires and aims could be re-articulated in accordance with a notion of the progression of history, seen as essentially metaphorical. This progression David Gascoyne refers to as "dialectical", in the following pattern: "Dada: negation. Surrealism: negation of negation; a new affirmation, that is" (Gascoyne, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, 45).

André Breton, a psychiatric intern during the war, managed this transformation by mating Dadaist discourse with Freudian doctrine: “Breton realized...that an historical situation existed which called for something more constructive than the now futile antics of the Dada group” (Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 130).

Freud bequeathed to the new movement a neologistic universe. He had provided signifiers which the Surrealists could use to do battle with mainstream bourgeois laws and ideals.

Surrealism proclaims the omnipotence of desire, and the legitimacy of its realization...To the objection that man lives in society, surrealism replies by the total destruction of the bonds imposed by family, morality, religion. (Nadeau, 50)

Freud’s terms were potent precisely because they were established in the vocabulary of social science. This granted the Surrealists a degree of theoretical legitimacy: “The accent [of surrealism], perhaps in reaction to Dada’s destructive anarchism, was on the systematic, scientific, experimental character of this new method” (Nadeau, 80). They could now appeal to the “laws” of the unconscious, far more primal and powerful than any conscious codes.

This legitimacy was perhaps of greatest concern to Breton himself, who would later become known as the “Pope” of Surrealism (Spector, 132) owing in part to his pedantry; or perhaps as Read more kindly supposes, owing to his “well-expressed ideas and scientific spirit” (Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 130). Salvador Dali would later reflect on his first impressions of Breton: “André Breton...seemed a pontiff, even when his conclave met in a café...with the apéritif as Eucharist” (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 84).

Freud’s “unconscious”, itself, was a translation of concerns and preoccupations which he had inherited from non-scientific cultural forms. Perhaps his terms were another substitutive link which ensured the survival of a myth. The Freudian unconscious had first found its seed in the fields of art and philosophy, as he announced on his eightieth birthday (Trilling, 34). His was yet another attempt to find a symbolic expression for the imaginary tension between the internal and external, personal and social.

Freud’s use of art is at very least an instance of the dialogue between scientific and artistic discourse which would come to dominate modernist thought. This interaction between disciplines was precisely that which would induce Lacan to a unique interpretation of Freudian *science*, and itself pose a reconciliation between disciplines:

...[I]nterest in Freud was increasing markedly in every area of French thought. But psychoanalysis was being introduced into France by means of two coexisting but conflicting modes. On the one hand there was the medical approach...On the other hand there was the intellectual approach, that of literary and philosophical avant-garde...But neither of the two approaches took the lead: they intersected; they contradicted one another; but they advanced with equal vigour. (Roudinesco, 15)

Lacan, in collaboration with the Surrealists, used Freud, as his adopted theoretical progenitor, to shake the assumptions of the French psychiatric establishment: “the younger generation [of French psychiatrists]...proclaimed themselves surrealists, and fancied they were thoroughly modern” (Roudinesco, 18) and would, “together with the Surrealists”, come to view madness “no longer as a phenomenon of deficiency, arising out of some anomaly, but just as a difference or *discordance* in comparison with normal personality” (53).

Roudinesco suggests that Lacan had, as early as 1923, encountered Dadaist publications and thought and Freudian theory, as well as Breton himself, both with devastating effect. She comments, “It was at this period...that Jacques violently rejected the family and the Christian values he had been brought up in” (13).

In adopting the signifiers of Freud’s theory, both Lacan and the Surrealists sought to do battle with the spectre of the law and traditionalism, and so facilitate their own respective plans for medicine and art. However, Freud’s primary concerns with the ameliorative aims of psychoanalysis meant that he would reject Surrealism and ignore Lacan. The gap between the objectives of psychoanalysis and those of Surrealism ultimately broadened, to the extent that Freud considered the Surrealists deranged – “absolutely mad, let’s say 95 percent, like absolute alcohol” (Chênieux-Gendron, 179). In a letter to Breton in 1933, Freud was also to claim “I am not able to clarify for myself what Surrealism is and what it wants” (Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, 152). This partial distrust had its reciprocal side. For the Surrealists, “Freud was one of those ‘Father figures’ Breton at once admired and faulted” (Spector, 132).

In 1932, after the completion of his doctoral degree,

[Lacan] was so sure his entry into the world of psychoanalysis had been a success that he sent a copy of his thesis to Freud himself, showing that he sought recognition from the master...But Lacan was in for a dreadful disappointment. From Vienna, in January 1933, came the laconic reply: “Thank you for sending your thesis.” The great man hadn’t even deigned to open the manuscript. (Roudinesco, 58)

Lacan and the Surrealists would treat this indifference of their *almus pater* in differing ways. Surrealism downplayed and “repressed” Freud’s definitive influence, depicting him as a genius unable to grasp the true import of his own discovery in the face of his persistent conservatism. A surrealist member, writing in 1928, suggests that “All the Austrian psychiatrist needs now is Papal consecration...” (Nadeau, 148). Breton in his battle with the master in 1932 even goes so far as to suggest Freud had significantly omitted his intellectual debt to other psychiatric research (specifically that of Volkelt) in his work (Breton, *Communicating Vessels*, 154).

Following another route, Lacan effectively murdered the man by making him a symbol and hijacking his signifiers. When invoking the name of Freud and his theory, Lacan claimed to be his true disciple, speaking of “...the return to Freud for which I am assuming...the role of herald” (Lacan, “The Freudian thing, or the meaning of the return to Freud in psychoanalysis”, 114). His was a war of creation, of supplementary discourse in the name of the master: “Not only did he conceal his sources, as if to strip what he said of any historical appendages; he also attributed to Freud concepts that were really his own” (Roudinesco, 267). This reticence was partly strategic. In this way he was able to avoid intellectual emasculation at the hands of the various psychoanalytic associations he saw as his persecutors. And yet his thesis was “ignored by the first generation of French Psychoanalysis” (Roudinesco, 58) despite his meticulous omission of any mention of surrealist impact on his work: “he didn’t breathe a word in avowal of this [the surrealist] major influence. He was careful not to quote the relevant sources, never even mentioned any of the great surrealist texts that lay behind his own, and made no reference to Dali, Breton” (Roudinesco, 56).

The tension between Lacan and members of the French psychoanalytic establishment would span his career, as would the “revolt against the ‘orthodoxy’ of Paris society” (Wilden, “Introduction”, xv), which continued to disregard him. Indeed it seems as if he would come to share this anti-bourgeois aim of the surrealist movement although his debt to them would remain largely unacknowledged. In fact it was to them that he turned initially for acceptance and recognition, especially so, since, unlike Freud and the psychiatric community, “the avant-garde had welcomed his thesis in the joint name of surrealism and communism” (Roudinesco, 61).

As part of their own revolt, the Surrealists were consciously engaged in a social project of “myth-manufacture”, with the renewal of society in view. This aspect became

of increasing importance: “Breton, summarizing the Surrealist activity later, will see its fundamental ambition in the ‘creation of a collective myth’” (Nadeau, 104).

If the purpose of Surrealism was indeed the cultivation of a new cultural mythology, then it is appropriate to invoke Barthes’ analysis of myth in understanding this. In *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes shows that myth, on both political and social levels, has, essentially, the structure of metaphor. In the construction of social myth, Barthes indicates, established signs change their functions and become the signified to new concepts. The original sign, however, despite being distorted is not obliterated. Indeed the power of the mythical concept depends on the original sign, as much as it depends on its alienation from it for its own existence. The metaphor played out in Barthean social mythology is that which results in an historical imaginary, capable of being manipulated.

Metaphor then becomes an arch-structure in both socio-historic and personal myth. Barthes shows that within culture one discovers the patterns of the signifier, confirming Lacan’s assertions that culture is a product of the signifier.

The combined retention and re-interpretation of the past thus plays a persistent, and sometimes ironic, role, in the events of this chapter. For instance, Lacan and the Surrealists’ struggle with cultural paternity can be viewed, with the problems of originality and influence, in their turn, as repetitions on a social level of the original paternal metaphor. Certainly with regard to the Surrealists a distinctly Freudian tale can be observed forever unfolding:

the psychological interactions – rivalries, jealousies – of the Surrealists among themselves and with external authorities – seem pervaded by what one might describe as Oedipal motives and behaviour (at least the paternal side). (Spector, 132)

Later Spector suggests, after reflecting on Lacan’s paternal metaphor, that this form of “rebellion against a paternal authority is characteristically French”, but suggests that any “sociology of the Oedipus complex is psychoanalytically incomplete...since it takes no account of the desire for the mother that corresponds to the rivalry with the father” (133). Although this comment is valid in terms of psychoanalysis’s most basic assumptions, it is not altogether accurate if one acknowledges the changes brought by Lacan’s contribution to psychoanalysis.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the desire for the mother, or at least for unity, is articulated by the symbolic into the desire for a signifier, for possession of identity contained (supposedly) within a signifier. Not only does the paternal metaphor displace

this, initially maternal, desire, it encapsulates it. The threat of castration then takes the form of the inhibition of desire by prescriptive signifiers. The search for a greater vocabulary of desire is the symbolic (and perhaps therefore sociological) expression of the desire for the mother, which itself is now re-articulated metaphorically. Such a view would seem to re-cast the Surrealist search for a realm of desire as the eternal search for an imaginary world, one that must sadly be communicated through the very language which alienates that world.

Viewed in the height of a conflict and uneasy accommodation between imaginary and symbolic orders, “sociological castration” is avoided by means of underscoring and hi-jacking significations, and through the perpetuation of new myths in an attempt to retain identity and an effective expression of desire. This reaction can certainly be understood as a paranoid relation, one that is allowed for in a confrontation with “A-Father” by Lacan. Surely this can extend to a confrontation with the figures in and of a “paternal discourse” – i.e., the symbolic – too. The fact that these guerrilla tactics follow a period of intense identification with a figure of authority is not only understandable, in the Lacanian paradigm it is to be expected.

This process of Oedipal identification seems to play itself out at the level of culture and much historical research appears to result in paternity tests. In view of this I must add that the relationship between Dali and Lacan examined in this thesis is one that defies a simple appeal to history in order to determine pre-eminence, but demands instead a continuing examination of their theoretical dialogue, their discursive tactics, throughout its development.

Significantly, both Dali and Lacan only participated in the second phase of surrealism which followed the publication of the second manifesto in 1929. The first phase had been pre-occupied with making surrealist practitioners passive receptors of a vocabulary of unconscious images and juxtapositions: “the other side of the logical décor” (Nadeau, 80). This “automatism” was the process Breton described in the First Surrealist Manifesto of 1924:

Totally involved as I was at the time with Freud, and familiar with his methods of examination which I had some occasion to practice on the sick during the war, I resolved to obtain from myself what one seeks to obtain from a patient – a spoken monologue uttered as rapidly as possible, over which the critical faculty of the subject has no control, unencumbered by any reticence, which is spoken thought as far as such a thing is possible. (Waldberg, 66)

This process resulted, for Breton, in “images of a quality such as we would never have been capable of achieving in ordinary writing” (Waldberg, 67). Indeed his definition of surrealism at the close of the manifesto was reduced to “pure psychic automatism...in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations” (67).

It was thus from the start through the medium of language that the surrealists first sought to evade the control of reason, indicating in doing so that the unconscious could speak and that perhaps only in the play inherent in signification could it make itself known. To do this the unconscious needed to evade the control of dominant reason and traditional discursive practices, through camouflaging itself in the midst of the “enemy”. Nadeau quotes Breton’s claim that words could “command thought” (85).

In keeping with the scientific tone of its adopted sire, the surrealists established a “Bureau of Surrealist Research” (Nadeau, 91) and published *The Surrealist Revolution* in December 1924. This journal sought to introduce surrealist thought and terms into contemporary discourse by extending surrealism’s scientific tenor, making it “deliberately severe in appearance, imitating that of a scientific periodical” (92).

Breton would later characterise this period in surrealism (1919-1925) as its “intuitive epoch” (Breton, “What is Surrealism?”, 116), dominated by an examination of the play of disinterested thought, “the omnipotence of thought, capable of freeing itself by means of its own resources. This belief witnesses to a prevailing view...that thought is supreme over matter”.

Breton opposed this period with what he called surrealism’s “reasoning epoch” (116). The shift from one “epoch” to the other was necessitated by a change in the contemporary political landscape. Surrealism had always aligned itself against bourgeois ideals. It increasingly, however, found its purely intellectual pursuits at odds with social reform and political movements claiming to share its motive of liberation. This lack of political capacity was not altogether surprising, as the movement had sprung from the disillusionment with society, its politics and governance, that was Dadaism. Breton recalls how the surrealists, coming “for the most part from the petit bourgeoisie” were concerned only with “intervention on the artistic plane” and were engaged foremost in a “campaign of systematic refusal” which in retrospect he labels “insatiable”. This campaign pitted the surrealists against “moral and social obligations” and was no doubt responsible for Breton’s claim in the 1924 manifesto that surrealism should be free of such “preoccupations”. Surrealism viewed politics as a product of oppressive and

deceptive reason, incapable of accommodating desire. Political action was also secondary to the surrealist project of altering human perception at its most fundamental level: "politics was only part of the Surrealist 'Revolution'. Surrealism was intended to be a way of life, a 'state of mind,' and a total change of attitude, civilisation, art, literature, and even economics" (Lippard, 27).

Soon, however, surrealism (a revolution that sought to liberate the mind of man and, in doing so, create a new reality) could no longer be oblivious to the very "real" social and economic oppression of that antagonistic everyday existence it sought to replace. This became evident to the movement in 1925, the year of Moroccan resistance to French rule:

No coherent political or social attitude, however, made its appearance till 1925; that is to say (and it is important to stress this), till the outbreak of the Moroccan war, which re-arousing our peculiar hostility to the way armed conflicts affect man, placed suddenly before us the necessity of making a public protest. (Breton, "What is Surrealism?", 117)

Breton suggests that this protest, which predictably took the form of a pamphlet, was "ideologically confused". It had become necessary for Surrealism to find a voice in a discourse which it was not equipped to speak in. It was soon, however, to adopt established signifiers, in political discourse that best accommodated and vindicated its desire, risking in doing so the subjugation of its own agenda: "Surrealist activity...was forced to ask itself what were its proper resources and to determine their limits; it was forced to adopt a precise attitude, *exterior to itself*, in order to continue to face whatever exceeded these limits" (117).

In Communism Surrealism encountered a discourse that re-articulated the notion of "revolution", one that would provide a challenge to surrealist cultural language and the validity of surrealist *practice*. The Surrealists, in order to gain socio-political legitimacy, needed to acknowledge the value of "practical" (117) and not only intellectual action.

More than ever, the revolution of the mind, the express aim of surrealism, demands as a primary condition, in the opinion of the surrealists, the liberation of man...; that today more than ever the surrealists rely entirely on , for the bringing about of human liberation, on the proletarian revolution. (115)

The movement itself was thrown into a crisis of definition. The struggle was in essence between those who sought to "maintain surrealism on a purely speculative plane and *treasonably* transfer it onto an artistic and literary plane" and those "who

would place it on a purely practical basis, susceptible at any moment to being sacrificed to an ill-conceived political militancy” (Breton, 127).

Breton seems to have been at pains to control the citizens of his fiercely autonomous surrealist “nation”. During a time he refers to as “agitated” and dominated by “characteristic wranglings” (127), he rallied against theoretical “emasculatation” by Marxism, while still identifying with its ideals: “it is no less necessary...for the experiments of the inner life to continue...without an external check, even a Marxist one” (quoted in Nadeau, 131).

Breton tried to transform the surrealist movement into one of political consequence. In order to do so, however, he needed to rid the organisation of those members who viewed political action as a perversion of artistic principles. This then was in effect the beginning of his “reasoning epoch”.

Breton penned the Second Surrealist Manifesto of 1929 as a “purge” (Nadeau, 164) in which “an important part...was devoted to a statement of the reasons which led surrealism to dispense for the future with certain collaborators” and was meant to “...set surrealist ideas in order” (Breton, “What is Surrealism?”, 129). Nadeau describes the defection of certain members of the group: “Certain youths had become men who did not bear the imperious yoke of this leader gratefully” (164).

Still positing the purpose of surrealism as the unification of the fields of the “real and the imaginary” and other such apparent “oppositions”, Breton proclaims in the *Second Surrealist Manifesto* that surrealism can be described as neither “purely constructive” nor “purely destructive” (quoted in “What is Surrealism?”, 129) as it seeks to collapse such distinctions. He also addresses the challenge raised by the Marxists directly, engaging primarily with its theory of dialectical materialism. It was through identification with this theoretical tenet of Marxism that Breton sought to display solidarity with the aims of communism. In the Manifesto he asks:

How could one accept the fact that the dialectical method is to be applied validly only to the solution of social problems? It is the whole aim of surrealism to supply it with not at all conflicting possibilities of application in the most immediate conscious domain. (129)

He goes on to argue for the materiality of surrealist practice, indicating how it accesses *inherent* and often contradictory qualities in “real” objects. He employs the example of a rose, suggesting its successive manifestations perceived by the surrealist, revealing its innate contradictions and dialectical possibilities. The rose “in the garden”

inspires, and is transformed in, its representation in the dream, in automatic writing and painting, before it “goes back into the garden” (130). In qualifying the activity of surrealism in political terms, Breton argues that attention to social relations forms part of the greater concern of surrealism with “human expression” (131), primarily demonstrated by surrealism’s engagement with language. He describes the purpose of surrealist language being to provide an “emotive shock” which in turn “gives value to...life” (132). It was this revelatory “shock” which Walter Benjamin hailed as “profane illumination”, revealing the historical dialectic in established signs. Breton in the Second Manifesto continues his suggestion that language is capable of constructing and consequently transforming social relations in its regulation of desire.

It is also in this manifesto that he celebrates the new mediums and theories that have revitalised the surrealist project. These, far from being a departure from the original surrealist experiment, are for Breton a “rallying back to principles” (133). Yet these principles had become translated into a political sphere demanding material action. The negation of the original surrealist dissent resulted in a movement reborn along with its flagship publication: “The review *The Surrealist Revolution*” was “succeeded by another, *Surrealism in the Service of the Revolution*” (136) which “opened with a telegraphic correspondence with Moscow in which the Surrealists proclaimed their desire to put themselves at the service of the Revolution immediately” (Nadeau, 169).

This was the phase of Surrealism which saw both Lacan and Dali come to prominence in their respective pursuits.

Breton had appealed to dialectical materialism as a theoretical principle common to both surrealist and Marxist practice. This claim was, much to the relief of Breton, aided by the arrival of a new recruit to the movement, Salvador Dali: “In the evening of this epoch rose the star of Salvador Dali, whose personality and activity were to cause the movement to take a new step” (Nadeau, 165).

Nadeau’s description of Dali’s arrival seems only somewhat less grandiose than Dali’s own version of his arrival in Paris. In *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, the transcription of Dali’s verbal account of his life, the chapter dedicated to evoking his encounter with the French capital is entitled: “How to conquer Paris”. It begins, “I landed there one morning with my sister and aunt, to judge its distance and size, as a boxer does during a round of studying his opponent” (74).

If Dali’s retrospection is accurate then the shared aggressivity displayed during his early encounters with Breton is certainly suggestive of paranoiac relation:

No way of getting away from listening to Breton orating to his court of followers like a big turkeycock...killing in the egg the slightest tendency to dissent...I could see Breton's blue eye looking fixedly at me forming a question mark above my head. He mistrusted me. (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 84)

This constitutes a natural reversal, then, of Dali's initial identification with Breton:

We had met in 1928...the second time I came to Paris. He had immediately assumed the guise of a *second father to me*. I felt at the time that I had been vouchsafed a second birth. The Surrealists to me were a kind of nourishing placenta and I believed in Surrealism as in the Tablets of the Law...I assimilated the letter and spirit of the movement which indeed corresponded so exactly to my deeper nature that I embodied it almost naturally. (112)

It would seem as if surrealism appeared as both maternal and paternal to Dali and would thus seem bound to provoke an eventual Oedipal reaction, whatever intellectual issues might be involved. Secret in her biography of Dali affirms this: "[o]ne assumes that he would be bound to rebel against Breton, if only because he had originally embraced him as his 'second father'" (Secret, 136).

Dali participated in 1929 in the production of *Un chien andalou* (*An Andalusian Dog*), a work which Breton would identify as the first surrealist film (Descharnes, 172). Dali reflects that it was "An admirable sadistic realisation appealing to everyone's latent masochism, *Un chien andalou*, that *succès de scandale*, marked my first Parisian recognition" (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 77).

The film debuted in October and was followed by an exhibition of Dali's paintings in Paris in the same year. In his review of the exhibition, Breton described Dali as "like a man who hesitates (and whose future will show that he did not hesitate) between talent and genius, or, as one might have said, between vice and virtue" ("The First Dali Exhibition", 44). Breton goes on to assess the significance of Dali's work for surrealist practice, and even hints at its eloquence in replying to the challenge of the materialists, "even though certain 'materialists' are anxious that the sound [of Dali's artistic voice] should not be confused with the creaking of his patent leather shoes". Breton expresses the conviction that Dali is a star prosecutor in the surrealist "case...against reality" (44). His concern is evidently to indicate that Dali with his "voluntary hallucination" is capable of not only overthrowing that which "oppresses us in the moral order" but also that which "'physically', as they say, deprives us of a clear view" (45).

With Dali in tow, Breton hoped to silence his Marxist critics in indicating that surrealism was not simply intellectual and therefore materially ineffectual.

Dali's arrival afforded the movement a new youth "[and] the surrealists could suppose the problem solved once they felt able to influence objects, to manipulate them according to desires unknown to even themselves" (Nadeau, 203).

Although Dali's paranoiac method may have facilitated a theoretical alliance between surrealism and Marxism, his capacity for negation did not. He even came to mock the "Surrealist's political hero" (117) - Lenin - and depict him as a "dictator unthinkable at the time to liberals about to join a united front against the Fascist dictators - the only thinkable enemies" (118). This no doubt renewed Breton's crisis in answering to the Marxists and he came to disapprove of what he perceived as Dali's tireless self-promotion, commercialism and "political deterioration" (118). As Dali recalls, "Politics - commitment, as the Surrealists called it - came between us. Marxism to me was no more important than a fart, except that a fart relieves me and inspires me" (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 117).

This attitude of Dali's resulted in a surrealist "trial" conducted against him in 1934. Despite the public charges of ill-considered political affiliations, Dali seems convinced that Breton resented him because of his "paranoia magic", which "never ceased bothering the Surrealists as it was too true an expression of the Surrealism they dreamt of" (123). Furthermore, Breton seems to have echoed conservative and communist disapproval of Dali's scatological and "pornographic" (118) imagery: "Breton set up a whole scale of values to be observed in one's dreams" (115).

Dali paints the hearing in comic tones, suggesting that added frustration attended the surrealist hierarchy on that day, as the night before they had failed to deface Dali's painting of Lenin: "...their short arms had not been able to reach the painting hung high. Which made them furious" (125). The day itself saw Dali defending his depictions of Hitler and Lenin as authentic dream images, "Lenin's anamorphic buttock was not insulting, but the very proof of my fidelity to surrealism" (126). During his defence Dali, who claimed to be suffering from a cold, stripped himself of several layers of clothing, coming to rest bare-chested and kneeling before Breton, "I had transformed the grotesque occasion into a true Surrealist happening" (127). Secret reflects rather more conservatively, "His version is that he won the argument" (135).

Dali continued to collaborate with the group for a number of years, but Secret suggests that "he was never as committed to the group after 1934" (136). In 1941, Breton was to comment that Dali had succeeded due to "a series of borrowings" in his theoretical outlook, and that since 1936 Dali "had no interest whatsoever for surrealism"

(Breton, "Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism in the Plastic Arts", 227). A pattern seems to emerge in the way Breton discredits rivals, namely by questioning the origin of their theoretical discourse. Breton went one step further and symbolically assaulted Dali by creating an anagram of his name, "Avida Dollars" (Spector, 118).

During the early 1930's, however, Dali seemed to the Surrealists (searching frantically for surrealist activity to support dialectical materialism), as well as to himself, a godsend. At the same time as Dali came to the Surrealist movement, Lacan's interaction with it was at its height; "At this point in his development Lacan came across a crucial article in the first number of *Surrealism in the Service of the Revolution*, published in July 1930" (Roudinesco, 31). The article in question was Dali's "The Rotten Donkey" which set out his suggestions on an artistic understanding of paranoia. At Lacan's request Dali met with him and discussed his methods of paranoiac creation (Roudinesco, 32).

One day in Paris I received a telephone call from a brilliant young psychiatrist...He congratulated me and expressed his astonishment at the accuracy of my scientific knowledge on the subject, which was so generally misunderstood. (Dali, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, 17)

Dali describes how, due to an attempt to combat the interference of his reflection on a copper surface on which he was working at that time, he "stuck a piece of white paper half an inch square" (18) on the end of his nose. Roudinesco reports it as a bandage and suggests "Dali expected his visitor to register some surprise, but he was disappointed. Lacan just sat and listened quietly as Dali expounded his ideas" (32). Dali claims that not only was he oblivious to the paper/bandage until after the meeting, but that he and Lacan "conversed for two hours in a constant dialectical tumult" (Dali, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, 18).

This seems to be an instance of an historical double image. To Dali the paper becomes a carrier of his anxiety "that everything about our first exchange of ideas should be perfectly normal and serious", and the paranoia concerning Lacan's gaze: "I grew increasingly puzzled over the rather alarming manner in which the young psychiatrist had scrutinized my face from time to time...Was he intently studying the convulsive effects upon my facial morphology of the ideas that stirred my soul?". Dali seems determined to impress upon one that he was here encountering and conquering scientific discourse embodied by the person of Lacan: "I was flattered finally to be considered seriously in scientific circles" and "we launched immediately into a highly technical discussion" (18).

For Dali, retrospectively perhaps, this encounter becomes an instance of paranoia, with the image on his nose underscoring his discussions “of the most transcendental nature in the most precise, objective and grave tone of voice”, and recalling him almost accusingly to an “underlying” truth: “this time the answer was given me by my image in the mirror”. Perhaps here Dali is consciously toying with Lacanian theory and imagery. Dali’s autobiography, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, appeared for the first time in 1942, while Lacan had published an article on his conception of a mirror stage as early as 1936 (Sheridan, “Bibliographical note”, xiii).

The year 1931 was a watershed for Lacan, for it was then that, starting from the basis of paranoia, he embarked on a synthesis of three areas of knowledge: clinical psychiatry, the teachings of Freud, and the second phase of surrealism. (Roudinesco, 32)

The result was of course Lacan’s doctoral thesis, published in 1932, but formal academic discourse was not his only outlet: “At the same time Lacan was publishing in the journal *Le Minotaure* articles of quite another stripe, from which all academicism was banished, this being an ‘arty review’” (Clément, 55). The Surrealists had for some time collaborated on this “lavish art magazine...and managed to make it, during the last years of its appearance, a surrealist organ” (Nadeau, 200). Gascoyne suggests that the surrealist contributions to this publication were initially intended to “reach a new and wider public” (Gascoyne, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, 126).

It was in this magazine that Dali publicly praised Lacan’s thesis. As mentioned in the first chapter, the communists also welcomed Lacan’s thesis as an instance of a materialistic understanding of paranoia (Roudinesco, 39).

Lacan interacted significantly with the Surrealists in 1932 and 1933 (136). He also maintained a long friendship with the dissident surrealist, Georges Bataille, marrying his ex-wife Sylvia after a protracted affair (184). As it happens, Bataille’s ideas, too, can be shown to have points of convergence with Lacanian doctrine.

The meeting between Dali and Lacan is commented on briefly by most commentators and the theoretical ties and ramifications superficially examined. There sometimes is also doubt expressed about which party most influenced the other. Roudinesco suggests “Dali’s point of view provided him [Lacan] with just the element he needed to turn his own clinical experience on paranoia into a theory” (32). Clément politely suggests that Dali “borrowed from Lacan’s thesis on paranoia the foundations of his own ‘critical paranoia’” (56). Bowie, offering a more balanced perspective, comments

cautiously, “It seems likely that Dali and Lacan influenced each other at this time and on this matter [paranoia]”. He, however, provides a disclaimer that “one would usually hesitate before enlisting Salvador Dali as a historian of ideas” (39).

Dali, himself, seems convinced that “Long before I read Jacques Lacan’s admirable thesis, I was perfectly aware of what force was mine,” arguing that the evidence “had always been present in my mind and principally in my work” (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 140).

In the next chapter Dali’s theory and its articulation “in his work”, together with issues surrounding the “encounter” with Lacan, will be examined, prior to a comparison and analysis of their theories on paranoia, including evaluations of critical commentary on differences and similarities between the two. I will also make suggestions as to how these perceptions of pre-eminence might have been structured discursively.

Lastly, it is fitting in an examination of historical and often-paranoid encounters that one reflect on Dali’s own meeting with Freud shortly before the psychoanalyst’s death. Dali had made three successive attempts to visit Freud in Austria (Dali, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, 23), but finally met him in London after the war.

Before leaving I wanted to give him a magazine containing an article I had written on paranoia. I therefore opened the magazine at the page of my text, begging him to read it if he had time. Freud continued to stare at me without paying the slightest attention to my magazine. Trying to interest him, I explained that it was not a surrealist diversion but was really an ambitiously scientific article, and I repeated the title, pointing to it at the same time with my finger. Before his imperturbable indifference, my voice became involuntarily sharper and more insistent. (25)

Dali expresses the anxiety no doubt also present in both Breton and Lacan when they sought the acknowledgement of the creator of their discourse. Dali, as with his predecessors, seeks to overcome the image of Freud. He does so retrospectively, indicating that he had surpassed the man by the time he encountered him, having made use of his theory and signifiers.

Two geniuses had met without making sparks. His ideas spoke for him. To me, they are useful crutches that re-inforced my confidence in my own genius and the authenticity of my freedom, and I had more to teach him than I could get from him. (Dali, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 121)

Yet, Dali still seems to crave recognition in the history of the “master”, repeatedly arguing that their meeting was a “turning point in Freud’s artistic conception” (121). This claim by Dali springs from a letter sent by Freud, commenting on his encounter with Dali. In this

correspondence he wrote that he had reconsidered his ideas regarding the Surrealists (he had thought of them before as “completely crazy”), due to the “young Spaniard, with his candid fanatic’s eyes and his undeniable technical mastery” (120).

This seems less a “turning point” than affection felt for the conviction of youth by a dying man (Freud died in 1939, a year after this meeting). But Dali’s disappointment may have been compensated for in another direction: there is evidence to show that where Dali’s influence may well have been a “turning point” was in the evolution of Lacan’s psychoanalytic conception.

Chapter Three

I. Paranoid Patterns: An Evolution of Method

In the transcription of his verbal biography, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, Dali claims that he “conceived the experimental formula of paranoia criticism around 1929” (141). Finkelstein suggests that traces of what was to become Dali’s paranoid-critical system of artistic creation are to be found in an essay published in March 1929, “The Liberation of Fingers”. In this essay Dali investigates the source of his obsessive fear of grasshoppers, attributing it to a forgotten associative link he had made between the insects and the revulsion he had experienced at holding a fish in his fingers, “It’s got the same face as a grasshopper – that’s what I spontaneously exclaimed” (Dali, “Liberation of Fingers”, 83). This anecdote was significantly restored to his memory by a symbol of masculine authority, his father.

Dali goes on to consider in the essay how certain images recur in the imagination of many, if not all, people. He demonstrates this by means of a survey, conducted amongst friends, concerning the image of a rotting or wounded donkey. He finds confirmation of his thesis in an image of a “flying phallus” (84) related to him by a “completely uncultured acquaintance” (83). This image of a “Winged Phallus” was identified in an essay of Freud’s, “Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood”, in 1910 (about which I later read in Freud [84]), as one revered in antiquity, but one that also re-occurred in contemporary representations and also psychoses. Finkelstein suggests that this image is implicitly connected with the grasshoppers in the text, both maintaining a line of signification initiated by an ideal of paternal authority. This may indeed be the case, indicating then a metaphoric chain between the images, winged phallus-fish-grasshopper, although in the text itself the links between these are repressed or hidden. Finkelstein recognises that Dali omits to “explicitly disclose the latent meaning of this fear of grasshoppers...intimating some form of repression” (91).

The images of the winged phallus and rotting donkey suggest a subconscious vocabulary to Dali, one composed of “hypnogogic” (84) images, which bubble up from the unconscious. Furthermore the implication here is that a single unconscious image may underlie numerous and seemingly disparate symbols¹⁰ in the objective world. This concurs with Lacan’s reflections on the relative poverty of the imaginary. Dali also

¹⁰ Dali’s suggestion that there is an imaginary structure behind the objective “real” means that the objects of that “real” become symbols for the images which make up the underlying structure.

indicates that these subliminal images will direct and shape one's perception, relating how, after he had uncovered one such image in a state of "presleep", he encountered it "frequently in the texts to which [he] devoted his reading" (84).

The "real" world essentially becomes one made up of symbols which are often linked inasmuch as they are used to represent the same subliminal image. However, the links between these symbols, as well as the connection between them and the impending and determinate image are actively repressed and go, for the most part, unrecognised.

Dali is concerned here with simultaneity - that is, coincidences, unexpected comings together, parallels – in which things that are quite dissimilar are superposed as to reveal some underlying relationship or identity, through a swift and flexible mechanism – the future paranoiac faculty – that functions similarly to the formation of dream images. (Finkelstein, 77)

For Finkelstein, Dali's array of symbols resembles the structure of Freudian displacement (Lacan's metonymy): the links between the winged phallus and its metaphoric replacements are repressed. Dali's paranoid method will hence become a means of recovering lost associative links and thereby reveal the true nature of both perception and the reality it underpins. Yet even as early as 1928 Dali was arguing for an activity which would be able to lay bare "normal cognitive relations which are removed from our habitual experience" (63). This was in an essay entitled "Reality and Surreality" in which Dali advocated the liberation of images inherent in objects and the relationships between objects. These "signs", as he refers to even the underlying images, "are formed out of the most primary necessities, steadfast desires and almost biological excitations of the instincts" (64). Dali envisages a return to a "vocabulary" in which objects and their base images (both as signs) are freed from the "thousand bizarre attributions to which they were submitted" (64) and restored to an order more capable of containing and expressing desire. To achieve this Dali insists that the artist opens himself to the widest generality of perception possible, making everything potentially significant, so that he can glimpse determinate images and patterns emerging from seeming chaos¹¹.

Within this generality, in which we seem to glimpse the very spirit of reality itself, a series of exact bits of knowledge, absolutely cognitive for our instinct and completely on the margin of cultural states, forms our vocabulary. (64)

¹¹ Here there is already an indication that Dali's method will be one which seeks to order perception.

The perception of this primary *language* of images, which “addresses itself and is formed by that which is the most elementary and pure in instinct”, shows up that, “independent of a given state of culture for which it was engendered”, symbolic discourse has no “absolute, general or real meaning”(65). Words become almost “indecipherable hieroglyph[s]” to Dali when observed from the more authentic realm of the imaginary; now completely undermined and devoid of conventional meaning they become as capable of supporting multiple associations as objects are. Words become signs which communicate something quite beyond their conventional meaning, indeed they even become capable of articulating that which contradicts their most superficial field of reference.

In this way the conventional real, which attempts to safeguard its modes of meaning with language, is seen as an attempt at representing and ordering a primal vocabulary of images. Meaning at a cultural level is thus shown to be a matter of convention, a “style” or artificial order rather than a natural one. This “style” has been “violently imposed” for Dali, enforced by a culturally engendered “intelligence” and it “hides” the “very spirit of reality itself” (64).

Lacan is following this line of thought when he writes of how the conventions of language impose their order on “purely animal Dissension (sic)”. He uses the example of how language enforces gender identity, quoting an anecdote of two small children:

...brother and sister, are seated in a compartment face to face next to the window through which the buildings along the station platform can be seen passing as the train pulls to a stop. “Look,” says the brother, “we’re at Ladies!”; “Idiot!” replies his sister, “Can’t you see we’re at gentlemen.” (“Agency of the letter in the unconscious”, 152)

This example also indicates the arbitrary nature of social signifiers with respect to the underlying vocabulary of images initially formed in response to instinct, as the boy and girl initially identify with the inappropriate signifiers for their sex. More importantly, however, it demonstrates the imposed nature of the symbolic order: “For these children, Ladies and Gentlemen will be henceforth two countries towards which each of their souls will strive on divergent wings”, yet, “they are actually the same country” (152). It is the topology of this second “country” which Dali, prior to Lacan, sought to map with his paranoiac faculty.

I concur with Descharnes, who identifies traces of Dali's evolving paranoiac method in his writings a year earlier than Finkelstein does. He asserts that it was as early as his essay "Reality and Surreality" in 1928, that Dali first

sets the stage for his signature theory of Paranoid-Critical Activity by arguing that objects in themselves do not have any necessary cohesion; it is the culturally conditioned intellect that organizes perception. Later Dali will consistently maintain that in order to truly "see," it is necessary to simulate the paranoid gaze which is governed by the will to systematize confusion (that is, perform the "cohesion") while disturbing normative reality. (Descharnes, 168)

Dali is talking of a system of signs which pre-date and exist alongside later culturally-determined terms. He affords both orders of signification the ability to inform reality, suggesting that the former be used to overthrow the latter.

In "Reality and Surreality" Dali contends that culturally acceptable signs still need to answer to the same "imperious necessities" of "the unknown and the instincts" which the initial imaginary vocabulary was established to represent. Yet the culturally sanctioned representations cannot be as "direct" as the imaginary ones or the surrealist art which seeks to uncover them. Consequently conventional art results only in "hybrid products of a superficial perfection" (65), as it is altogether unaware that it precariously straddles both orders of signification.

The creators of conventional artistic "products" are sufficiently ignorant of the necessity that their output represent what Dali maintains be another, imaginary "reality", that they attempt to institute false "aesthetic systems[s]" (66) for judging the value of art. These systems become naïve if one accepts that a subliminal "vocabulary" must, according to Dali, dominate art of any value. Furthermore the accuracy with which any work of art depicts that vocabulary becomes the criterion for determining its worth. For Dali art is only ever effective because it reflects the images which are the stamps of the instincts. Artists who deny this may suffer from a false consciousness but this does not exempt their art from being subject to such an assessment. The "hybridity" of both life and art (suspended between two arenas of signification) is precisely what Dali proposes surrealist art seek to emphasise, leaning strongly, however, towards a representation of the primal vocabulary.

Yet at this stage in Dali's work there is no direct reference to paranoia, merely the groundwork for a systematisation of reality around latent imagery. As we have seen this imagery is formed in response to certain instincts, following the Freudian paradigm, and is shown to inhabit a succession of metaphorical signifiers. This pattern of symbolic

substitution was one which Dali also pursued when producing *Un Chien Andalou* in 1929, “the ‘discourse’ of the film” being made up of “chains of metaphoric associations” (Finkelstein, 95). One seemingly disparate image replaces another in a series which aims to suggest some sort of underlying connection. In the film specifically a handful of ants is replaced by a sea urchin, which in turn is replaced by a close-up of a woman’s unshaven armpit.

While working on the film in Paris (Dali, “Documentary – Paris 1929 – 1”, 93) Dali also produced a series of so-called “documentaries”. These reports, Dali claimed, represented “rigorously and scrupulously recorded facts”, transcribed as “anti-literarily (sic) as documentary”. He does admit that his “tendentious” (104) documentation is extreme, but even so, argues that it is not far removed from the scandalous and artificial ordering of the real around convention and its modes of representation. He uses the example of riddles to indicate how “objective facts”, once removed from a customary systematisation, appear both strange and “enigmatic” yet never cease to be as objective or true. He argues that even “simple instinctual documentation” constitutes a riddle, a collection of sense-impressions, which must be ordered so that it can be made coherent. He demonstrates, however, that there are multiple solutions.

In these “documentaries” Dali goes further to suggest that the conventions of meaning determined by language already constitute a systematisation of the riddle of the real. He demonstrates the arbitrariness of this systematisation, however, beginning his ‘documentary’ with “the very audacious supposition that the words *hand*, *table*, etc. have a general meaning”. His purpose is to indicate that reality is more composed by a certain style than constituted by any objective existence or transcendent meaning.

Dali argues that even the writing of a “realist author” has “very little” to do with reality, but “above all and almost exclusively, they have to do with his intellectual system” (94). The “intellectual system” and therein the systematisation of the real is determined for Dali by “prejudices” and “conventions,” including those of representation, such as the “infinity of...ready-made sentences”. In subverting convention he is able to show how reality can be manipulated by altering its system of representation. These “documentaries” recall Breton’s manipulation of representation, and therein perception, in the “First Surrealist Manifesto” (1924). Here Breton altered the way in which the “visual image” of “a man leaning out of a window” (quoted in Nadeau, 81) would be conventionally signified, representing it to himself instead as “There is a man cut in two by the window”. This new signification not only reordered perception and its “real”, it also

“offered no ambiguity” as to its objective truth for Breton. Dali’s documentaries sustain such shifts in signification and thereby perception: “seven hands start chasing each other, three gloves slip onto three hands, two hands jump on top of a chair, one on top of a table 9 feet away” (Dali, “Documentary – Paris 1929 – V”, 105).

In his first exhibition in Paris in November 1929, Dali made extensive use of the series of images which he had established in his earlier painting and writing. These consisted mostly of allusions to the figures of Freudian theory, but these were given metaphorical disguise in Dali’s biographical details.

Although there is much truth in the contention that Dali found most of his psychoanalytical material in books – whether translations of Freud’s work or popular treatises on psychology – this does not necessarily mean that his treatment of the material was simplistic... However “common property” his basic materials may have been, their subtle and intricate permutations in his work were far from being so. (Finkelstein, 97)

Finkelstein goes on to suggest that the works of 1929 introduced “psychosexual Oedipal ‘dramas’ – albeit it exhibiting [a] very obvious personal and quite idiosyncratic slant”. These themes were intermingled with ones surrounding the “mother and castrating father, masturbation, shame, guilt”. Dali’s preoccupations were often depicted in recurring symbols, many of which Finkelstein endeavours to decode. For example, he finds a fear of castration lurking behind Dali’s images of fish and grasshoppers (an interpretation derived from the contexts in which they are used).

Finkelstein does not pause long enough to reflect on the fact that he is the one sketching in a systematisation here, insisting, it would seem, on a closure of meaning. He forecloses the play of Dali’s imagery with a metaphor which purports to equate it with the terms of psychoanalysis. Whereas Dali’s imagery is shifting and self-subverting, only fixed temporarily in the real of his depictions by his evolving method, Finkelstein’s interpretation seeks out an unequivocal signification as truth. The terms of this interpretation “absolutize” themselves for Finkelstein as the narrative behind Dali’s works. This demonstrates that Dali’s work can produce a paranoiac reaction in its beholder by invoking a will to arrest the subliminal play it represents.

That Dali’s works were capable of inducing an awareness of latent unconscious material in their audience was something Breton realised in 1929, when he reviewed the Dali exhibition in Paris. Writing of Dali’s images that they provided some sort of “interior showcase”, adding, however, that the images reverberated not *only* in the spectators themselves but also “in the air”, as though this air

suddenly revealed itself as a mere play of mirrors which it would be sufficient to modify, surely though imperceptibly, for an immense gap to form, in which would appear at last the figures, exorcisable or not, which haunt a second landscape, of the second zone, of whose imminence everything rightly seeks to warn us. (Breton, "The First Dali Exhibition", 44)

This seems to suggest that Dali was engaged simultaneously with both the universal and the subjective in his "modification" and manipulation of signs. Through his images he manages to speak a language, not only shared by everyone, but which is latent in the very world we perceive.

Breton goes on to celebrate what he calls the power of "voluntary hallucination" in revealing the dialectic which material reality represents, "that which 'physically' deprives us of a clear view" (45), the "secret of surrealism" being that it perceived that "something is hidden behind" it. Breton is celebrating an active force, present in the work of Dali, which, through its capacity for "imperceptible modification", is capable of decomposing the fiction of material reality. For Breton, Dali's art represents "the most hallucinatory known until now" (45).

This subversion of conventional meaning and standard significations was also the expressed intent of *An Andalusian Dog*. In an interview Dali gave at the time of its public showing (October, 1929) he criticised authors in particular for the propagation of limiting convention:

Only the imbecility and cretinism consubstantial with the majority of men of letters and particularly utilitarian epochs has rendered possible the belief that real facts are endowed with a clear signification, a normal, coherent and adequate meaning. From which proceeds the official suppression of mystery, the recognition of logic in human actions, etc. ("An Andalusian Dog", 108)

He views the oppressive process, supported by "men of letters", as one of "accommodation" which "makes thought appear coherent when its free functioning is incoherence itself". He goes on to criticise writers for "the fabrication of a complete and arbitrary world which they have imposed as real".

Amidst his accusations against logo-centric discourse, Dali reserves a word of praise for psychoanalysis in that it undermines the order traditionally imposed by realist literature, revealing "human *facts*". He does, however, add a word of warning that explanations provided by science, even those of psychoanalysis, sure as they are of their "facts", are no "no less enigmatic or irrational" and ultimately, no less arbitrary it would seem, than any other imposed order. Although psychoanalysis is dedicated to representing the narrative of the imaginary, it participates in the regulations of convention, attempting to fix its terms and so close play. He confirms this early opinion in

his later book, *The Conquest of the Irrational* where he openly accuses psychoanalysis of reductionist crimes against surrealist imagery by giving an account of surrealist art in its language of scientific convention¹². Dali only allows for the irrefutable concrete existence of the “irrational and unqualifiable”, mostly exemplified for Dali in “hideous crimes” and “acts of violence”(“An Andalusian Dog”, 109). This in many ways foreshadows Dali’s choice of paranoia as the tool with which to launch an attack on the objective and moral order.

Lacan confirms the violent nature of paranoia in his studies concerning the motives of paranoiac crime in 1933 where he reveals that the violent impulses of paranoiacs reflect the way in which structures fundamental to their personalities had been established in response to certain drives (Lacan, *Motives of Paranoiac Crime*, 2). Dali, however, as early as 1929 had already perceived what Lacan would later suggest, namely that these aggressive formations of the personality were common to all, but had undergone an imposed disguise, bringing about a radically inaccurate representation of desire, an inveiglement associated, as he viewed it, with language practices.

Yet the actual word “paranoia” did not appear in Dali’s theoretical work until a lecture delivered in March 1930 and published in April the same year (Descharnes, 173), entitled “The Moral Position of Surrealism”. Here he goes even further to collapse the distinction between what is considered “good order” and pathology, specifically the systematisation brought about by paranoiac delusion. He claims that the latter is in keeping with the “process initiated by reality” as it is equal in fulfilling the human “will to systematise confusion” (110).

Everyone bends over painfully and acts according to systems which seem normal and logical; however, all this activity and all these actions unconsciously respond to the world of irrationality and conventions, to images glimpsed and lost in dreams. It is for this reason that when we find images that resemble them, we think that it is love and we say that the fact of looking at them makes us dream. (113)

The paradox of paranoia becomes evident when Dali hints at the “conventions” which this so-called irrational disorder establishes in obeying the “will to systematise”. Paranoia deconstructs convention in an act of construction, with subversion effected in the establishment of a new order. Paranoia reveals images which underlie all reality, a reality illusorily fixed by the customs of culture. The realisation of multiple images which

¹² See the discussion of *The Conquest of the Irrational* later in the chapter.

are embedded in our perceptions of reality forms the early basis of Dali's paranoiac method:

Recently, through a decidedly paranoiac process, I obtained the image of a woman whose position, shadow and morphology, without altering or deforming anything of her real appearance, are also, at the same time, those of a horse. (Dali, "The Moral Position of Surrealism", 112)

Dali, however, also shows a healthy distrust of the images delivered to him by his paranoiac faculty, acknowledging that while they may be as authentic as those of normal perception, if not more so, it is still a question as to "wherein lies the truth" of what the image actually "represents". He employs these various images to produce a range of alternative realities, each fixed in its depiction, and yet also simultaneously undermined by still other images as well as the context that these comprise. Any so-called context, in fact, being only a systematisation imposed by the viewer. This activity gives Dali an opportunity to show that, after such an experience, the credibility of all reality is questioned and one is now "faced with the mental doubt of knowing whether the same images of reality are simply the product of our paranoiac faculty" (112).

Dali seems to re-enact the dialectic, which in his understanding, has resulted in material reality. He also demonstrates an awareness that what is at stake is to resist the closure represented by any one reality. He intends to immerse himself in the play of imagery which precedes any fixation of meaning and so endlessly defer closure. The imaginary has not "absolutized" itself here to the exclusion of further play.

It is interesting to reflect that Dali will eventually be captured in the figures of the imaginary. Bowie hints at this when, in order to separate Dali's conceptions of paranoia from those of Lacan, he quotes from *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*: "I believe my paranoia is an expression of the absolute structure, the proof of its immanence. My genius consists of being in direct contact with the cosmic soul" (39). He comments that "unlike Dali's paranoia-criticism", Lacan's paranoid mode of psychoanalysis "vacillates interminably between mental registers" (40). Certainly Dali's consistent engagement with the forms of the imaginary carries within it the danger of these forms overcoming the horizon of perception, as is evidenced in Bowie's quote. However, this was certainly not the case early in Dali's career and perhaps Bowie's error is that he chooses to quote from a work published in 1976. Paranoia, at least in the nineteen-twenties and thirties is only employed by Dali to bring to realisation those metaphorical chains of association implicit in perception without proclaiming their

absolute power. Dali wanted to effect an interaction between the orders of representation that would highlight the artificiality of both, to organise “reality in such a way as to utilize it to control an imaginative construction” (112). The fact that the underlying images are also to some extent false, although perhaps shared and universally determined, is very important here.

The next article of significance is “*L’Anne pourri*”, in which Dali makes the first overt reference to a notion of paranoid-critical activity. It was this article which Lacan encountered in the first issue of *Surrealism in the Service of the Revolution* (July, 1930).

In this article Dali continues his attack on reality reasserting that paranoia shares the same essential “will to systematise” which structures objective reality,

paranoid activity always employs controllable and recognisable material. It is enough that the delirium of interpretation should have successfully linked together the meanings of the images in the heterogeneous paintings covering a wall for the real existence of this link to be no longer deniable. Paranoia uses the external world as a means to assert the obsessive idea, with its disturbing characteristic of making this idea’s reality valid to others. (115-116)

Paranoia becomes a means to induce a similar ordering of perception in others. This is possible for Dali because, as he makes clear in the course of the article, the reality we perceive has already been induced by an established code of representation. Thus to change the perception of the world one need only re-arrange the simulacra which have already structured that reality. Breton refers to this ability of the paranoid as one of perceiving the “uninterrupted becoming” of objects, which “allows the paranoid who is their witness to consider the images of the external world unstable and transitory, or suspect; and what is so disturbing is that he is able to make other people believe in the reality of his impressions” (Breton, “What is Surrealism?”, 137). In Dali’s words,

...an individual endowed with this [paranoid] faculty may, theoretically, see at will the form of any real object change successively, exactly as in a voluntary hallucination but with this more important (in a destructive sense) difference, that the diverse forms assumed by the object in question are universally controllable and recognisable, as soon as the paranoid has merely pointed them out. (Dali, “The Rotting Donkey”, 117)

The appearance of the so-called objective world is one which has been wrought by the violent imposition of particular representations. The paranoid mechanism, according to Dali, gives one insight into how these “simulacra” have been used to shape existence, showing that to deconstruct them through rearranging or replacing them is to regain awareness of the “multiple aspects of the concrete”. One may interfere with the

simulacra at the level of the imaginary, or at any point in the unconscious chain which connects this level with the forms given to perception. Paranoid-criticism requires an awareness that what is perceived as reality is the product of a system of representation, and therefore to tamper with this system is to, in the effect it has on perception, appear to transfigure the world.

The question of material change is rendered moot when one realises that due to the imposition and generation of such simulacra, one can never know the material world: Lacan's "Real".

It is because of their failure to cohere with reality and because of the arbitrary element in their presence, that simulacra can easily assume the form of reality and that reality, in its turn, adapts itself to the violences committed by simulacra, which materialist thought cretinously confuses with the violences of reality. (Dali, "The Rotting Donkey", 117)

This quote prefigures Dali's dissatisfaction with materialist philosophy which was to initiate his break with the surrealist movement. It also shows that this was because he conceived of the world as being constructed by modes of signification. These are at once both arbitrary, disallowing a coherent picture of the Real, and yet also linked to that Real: a link "conscious or unconscious" (117) which, in the final synthesis of perceptual reality becomes untraceable.

Such a link to Dali means that there could be no comparison between simulacra and the Real, since "comparing two things would only be possible if no link existed between them" (117). He maintains that if such a comparison were "tangibly" possible, all it would do is give us a picture of "the idea we had formed for ourselves of the arbitrary". Simulacra are the only access given to the Real, which they both contain and displace, and so to compare simulacra to any idea of the Real, is really only to contrast simulacra. What we encounter in doing so is really only the structuring which our own conceptions have imposed. Even the notion of contrasting simulacra is an illusion as all simulacra are linked in their representation of the Real. In choosing one representation over another all we succeed in doing is indicating our preference at the level of the arbitrary and so demonstrate our paranoiac will. In this way a style of allegory is made into reality.

Dali indicates that "shit, blood and putrefaction" are, for him, simulacra which underlie reality, and may in turn eclipse "*ideal* things" (118) which go unrecognised in the tyranny of representation. It is these simulacra, however, "whose appearance reality painfully tries to imitate" in Dali's conception, and thereby it is the awareness of these

signifiers behind reality, which “leads us to the *desire* for *ideal* things”. Such an insight is afforded by the paranoiac capacity to decode the dialectic which reality presents to us in its signs (including its objects). It is in this tracing of chains of signification that the desire for the ideal is initiated and maintained.

As we have seen paranoiac systematisation is a re-ordering of perception, and therein reality, one which engages the faculty of reason to re-navigate the system of self and world. The critically aware paranoid consciousness opens up the play of representations which shape perceptual reality: the network of chains made up of metaphor which stretch across the unconscious. This does not bring one to any single *true* representation as one can never know “whether the series of representations has a limit or whether, as we have every reason to believe, such a limit does not exist” (116-7), yet it does afford one some sort of greater or more authentic consciousness. Dali also indicates that it is possible, through repeatedly engaging with the series of representations, to get an impression of their source, namely some sort of ideal image. The more one attempts to bring reality closer to an increasingly authentic representation of desire, the more one “betrays a hatred of reality and a need for refuge in an ideal world, just as what happens in infantile neurosis” (118).

“The Rotting Donkey” demonstrates an awareness of the Freudian concepts of the pleasure and reality principles, as well as the regressive pull which the former exerts on the individual: “To be their own ideal, once more in regard to sexual no less than other trends, as they were in childhood – this is what people strive to attain as their happiness” (Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction”, 95). He also concurs with Freud’s proposition that the infantile realm contains certain ideals which are carried forward into reality by either sublimation or paranoiac delusion. Yet it also clear that Dali does not separate these processes as fundamentally as Freud does, equating the structuring of the so-called normal real with that of the paranoiac real. The reality afforded by successful sublimation may be a conventional one, but it is no less delusional. He also remarks:

Doctors agree in recognising the speed and the inconceivable subtlety so frequently found in paranoiacs, who, taking advantage of motives and facts so refined as to escape normal people, reach conclusions that are often impossible to contradict or reject, and which in any case almost always defy psychological analysis. (116)

This accords with Freud's reflections on paranoia in both his article "Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality" as well as his case study concerning Doctor Schreber, to the effect that paranoia demonstrates an alarming awareness of psychological processes, the delusion being at once both an interpretation as well as a re-enactment of these. Indeed in "Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality" he comments on how the paranoiac employs his knowledge of the unconscious as a means to analyse and attribute ulterior motives to others (200).

In his paper "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), Freud suggests that the paranoiac is peculiarly capable of self-observation. He suggests that this is so because the paranoiac lives out the self-observational faculty of conscience (arising from the encounter with the ego-ideal) as reality. In addition Lacan indicates that any subject, in effect, becomes an object to himself through an alienating series of objectifying identifications (initiated by the ego-ideal) but that the paranoiac is the only one who represents this accurately in his delusion ("I is another"). Consider here Breton's reflections that Dali in his paranoid critical method seemed capable of just such an activity, "he has shown himself strong enough to participate in these events [episodes of paranoiac delusion] as actor and spectator simultaneously, that he has succeeded in establishing himself both as judge and party to the action instituted by pleasure against reality" (quoted in Ades, 120). For Freud, Dali and Lacan paranoia is an example of how the structure inherent in everyone's subjectivity is experienced consciously and authentically in the paranoiac delusion

Dali's statement concerning the intellectual skill of paranoiacs however most agrees with Freud's comments that paranoiacs have a "characteristic tendency...to construct speculative systems". Indeed, Freud goes so far as to equate this "tendency" with the capacity for "philosophical introspection" (Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction", 91). Here Dali finds confirmation of his thesis that paranoia partakes of the same "will to systematise" as consciousness itself, and in fact represents a heightened, and not reduced, state of consciousness.

In her seminal work on Dali, *Dali and Surrealism*, Dawn Ades begins her chapter dealing with the development of the paranoid-critical method by quoting from Hamlet. She does so to illustrate how Dali's method demonstrates "the ability of the artist to perceive different images within a given configuration", going on to say

This is not unlike Hamlet teasing Polonius:

HAMLET: Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?
 POLONIUS: By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.
 HAMLET: Methinks it is like a weasel.
 POLONIUS: It is backed like a weasel.
 HAMLET: Or like a whale?
 POLONIUS: Very like a whale...

(Ades, *Dali and Surrealism*, 119)

What Ades unwittingly demonstrates here as well, is the capacity for the paranoiac delusion to induce an alternative system of representation in others, especially if one can invoke their conscience or stand in place of it. This is because paranoiac will is able to tamper with the system of representation which defines perception. It is able to make itself heard in the dialogue between the imaginary and the symbolic which, at the level of our perception, manipulates and is spoken through the objects of our world (no longer perceivable in their Real form). Paranoia, in navigating and manipulating an existing system of representation, also employs these objects as its interlocutors. As Germain comments, "The mammals in the clouds depend as much upon cloud-shapes as upon Hamlet's inner desire to transform them. For the surrealists the remarkable thing is that Polonius can witness the transformation" (36).

Ades and Germain may very well have used an example Freud gave to demonstrate this capacity,

There is no doubt that it is easier for the patient's intelligence to recognise the resistance and to find the translation corresponding to what is repressed if we have previously given him the appropriate anticipatory ideas. If I say to you: "Look up at the sky! There's a balloon there!" you will discover it much more easily than if I simply tell you to look up and see if you can see anything. In the same way, a student who is looking through a microscope for the first time is instructed by his teacher as to what he will see; otherwise he does not see it at all, though it is there and visible. (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 489)

Dali also served in "The Rotting Donkey" to recast the flavour of surrealist activity, insisting on the ability of the paranoiac to actively create, although at this stage he saw this method as operating "simultaneously with automatism and other passive states" (115). In doing this he was also arguing for an idea of paranoia which went against contemporary psychiatric conceptions of the "disorder", which viewed it as the passive reaction of flawed reason to an organic deficiency. In this respect Lacan was to follow Dali's lead, peculiarly enough not only in his thesis, but also in his later work.

Lacan, in his thesis, also came to view paranoia as an alternative systematisation of the processes which also determine normal perception. Later in his work he incorporated Dali's idea that normative reality itself as well as identity are paranoid constructions: that everyone follows a paranoid route to selfhood. The structure to the experience of the personality was to be found in its own formations and was not merely an automatic biological response to organic stimuli. Dali indicated to Lacan how paranoia, in its creative re-organisation of psychical and thereby perceptual forms, afforded one the opportunity to see that such a system already provided for all conscious phenomena. Dali's work and interpretation of Freud here predicts Lacan's assertion that the personality, and thereby perception and interpretation, along with the reality they afford, is constituted by a series of ideal images which are mistaken as real and that this constitutes paranoia.

It now becomes necessary to attempt to perceive the ideal forms implied by Dali's re-occurring imagery, or simulacra. Recall that his simulacra are at once arbitrary and determinate: linked, yet these links generally disappear in perception, owing to a sort of amnesia. Dali's paranoia attempts to uncover the full range of simulacra which successively substitute for an ideal, showing, in his pursuit of this ideal, that such a range is potentially present in any one perception. In doing so he reveals the dialectic behind a symbolic real, consisting of a series of other signs, and through association with an ideal, all signs. These associations, in their patterns, trace the line or the trajectory of our desire. Indeed the code operates precisely because it is able to link us to our original desires, yet perversely enough, its system of representation has impacted on our desire to the point where we misrecognise it.

Dali asserts that he does not know in which, if any, of the signs he uncovers the truth lies, merely that to uncover them is to encourage the desire for ideal things. To fix to these simulacra of Dali any single corresponding value then is to capture them again in an arbitrary form, revealing only a paranoid attempt to systematise confusion, while it is the polyvalent nature of reality which Dali's work ultimately seeks to imitate. His paintings represent a snapshot of the imaginary: images fixed paranoiacally in place. Yet Dali attempts to condense dozens of images into one and uses his paranoia to fix a constantly shifting context of images, thereby undermining any consistency or certainty one might wish to interpret and impose.

II. Dali's Imagery

Finkelstein, who criticises others as “motif hunters”, engages in the same practice himself when he remarks (108) on the “frequent recurrence of motifs” in Dali's works. Despite this inconsistency to his argument, he does manage to indicate that the series of images in Dali's works become a “visual vocabulary” (98), a series of terms which are rephrased in every painting, so enhancing their ambiguity:

It is mostly the combinations or permutations of the symbols that endow them with a specific significance, or, at least, add another layer of meaning by introducing some form of ambiguity. In other words, the context in which the symbols are placed may transform their character or identity, with these symbols forming an intricate mesh of connections – both within the painting and in relation to other paintings executed at the time – that, indeed, transcends, in the more successful instances, the psychoanalytical reading of the painting on the more obvious level proposed before. (99)

The more “obvious” level to which Finkelstein refers is where he equates certain characters in Dali's paintings with the super-ego, mother and castrating agent.

Yet Finkelstein goes on to reject such a simplistic response to Dali's work, plastic and verbal, when he examines Dali's poem of 1930, “The Grand Masturbator”, which he feels “turns out to be Dali's testimony to his thematic concerns around that time” (108). Here he argues that the effect of Dali's writing is to constantly change “the frame of reference” (109) and in doing so indicate that it is these very “frames” which structure perception. The poem parodies, therein also mimicking, established modes of writing,

We would have considered Dali's intentions as being epic in scope but for the obvious use of clichés and non sequiturs and, at times, the sophomoric humour, that render them mock epic in character...Mocking its own pretentiousness, the poem thus brings about an ironic reversal, undermining our expectations of an explanation for all that has taken place before. This vision of frames within frames, just like Chinese boxes, forms part of Dali's general program...of relativising vision and discrediting or subverting reality. (110)

Finkelstein thus finds within the poem a certain “sophomoric humour”, locating in its closing stages a “mangled joke” concerning the misadventures of the “rower” of the poem (“The Grand Masturbator”, 132).

Such humour actually encapsulates the Freudian idea of displacement, although Finkelstein does not recognise this, despite arguing that Dali's work otherwise often imitates the “amnesia” characteristic of repression. As it happens, Freud actively compares humour which has freed itself from the constraints of “intelligibility” to the

process of displacement wherein the “allusion to the genuine thing could not be easily followed” (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 208). This is quite in keeping with the “joke...with no punch line whatsoever” (Finkelstein, 110) which Dali tells in the “Grand Masturbator”, as it is precisely the resistance to define any particular meaning which creates the absurdity here; all the links which might have made the tale “intelligible” are missing.

Dali tells of the friend of the owner of a boat who finds a rower “whose complexion/is unhealthy but who is endowed with a remarkable visual memory” and instructs him to retrieve “two young girls” from a “different/beach/from the one agreed upon”

And now
it was too late
or better still they were all
too tired
(the two gentlemen especially)
to return
to the first
beach.

(“The Grand Masturbator”, 133)

One anticipates some conclusion to this potentially comic scenario, but it never arrives. In its evocation of a senseless search, both for the “first beach” by the characters of the narrative as well as for the meaning of the “joke” itself, this section of the poem echoes the attempt by the subject to recover images and links lost to sublimation and repression.

It might also be suggested that Dali himself is the rower referred to, and that with his “remarkable visual memory¹³” he sets out to capture the images from some sort of “first beach” or source. However this represents an interpretation of a poem which seeks to defy a closure of meaning or definition as part of its campaign of “discrediting or subverting reality”. It is Dali’s intention that the poem become an “indecipherable hieroglyph” (Dali, “Reality and Surreality”, 65), and that its terms will only carry meaning if they are forced into being “employed or combined, with a series of intelligent notions of culture, morals, circumstances and vaudeville; that is to say none of them have any absolute, general or real meaning”. This then re-enforces Dali’s argument that meaning shifts and is only paranoiacally fixed by an imposed context, and most generally by the context of convention. The only “meaning” of the poem is perhaps that a “vacillation”

¹³ David Gascoyne celebrates him as the “cutlass of memory” (“Salvador Dali”, *Collected Poems*, 21).

between terms is the best approximation of “truth” that one can hope for. What this “joke” conveys then is the fundamental truth of existing in a world where one’s words both contain and actively displace any authentic meaning (“representation by the opposite”).

Freud also uses humour to demonstrate this potential role of language:

Two Jews meet in a railway carriage at a station in Galicia. “Where are you going?” asked one. “To Cracow,” was the answer. “What a liar you are!” broke out the other. “If you say you’re going to Cracow, you want me to believe you’re going to Lemberg. But I know that in fact you’re going to Cracow. So why are you lying to me?”

(Freud, “The Purposes of Jokes”, 161).

Freud finds in this brand of “sceptical” humour a subversion of linguistic expectation, which he calls “representation by the opposite”.

The joke...is pointing to a problem and is making use of the uncertainty of one of our commonest concepts. Is it the truth if we describe things as they are without troubling to consider how our hearer will understand what we say? Or is it Jesuitical truth, and does not genuine truth consist in taking the hearer into account and giving him a faithful picture of our own knowledge? (161).

For Dali the lie would be to speak conventionally, pretending that any meaning that was established in this way was the “truth”. Instead he “takes the hearer into account” as one, who despite speaking the language of convention, experiences its duplicity at a fundamental level and, though his subversion of this seemingly almighty code, attempts to give “a faithful picture of [his] own knowledge”. He “lies” in deferring conventional meaning in order to tell the “truth”, which is that in speaking at all, he is still “lying”.

In exactly the same way for Lacan, symbolic signifiers can recall imaginary ones while displacing them, so that truth resides in untruth. Decomposing the condensation which the signs, which are taken as reality, have undergone, is to lay open their falsehood at the same time as one reveals their capacity as truth, which indeed may be the only path to any “truth” possible. It is this knowledge that the Lacanian analyst will use to regulate the “yield of his ears” (Lacan, “Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis”, 45). Perhaps if one does so then it is possible to understand the experience Dali is attempting to convey. However, it must also be noted, that if Dali is correct, then to decode “The Grand masturbator” is really only to employ different, yet no more authentic or less arbitrary terms which, consequently, will not be any more capable of faithfully expressing experience of the imaginary or, indeed, of anything which may have predated it.

Behind the shoulders
 Of the simulacrum...
 A short lane of fountains
 Evoked
 The clear
 Decomposition of rotting donkeys
 Of rotting horses
 Of rotting cats
 Of rotting horses
 Of rotting mouths
 Of rotting chickens...

(124)

The best one can do, the poem seems to say, is to uncover a series of images in deconstructing various simulacra. These images, through their interminable repetition, seem to suggest some sort of pattern, however vague and absurd it might seem. Even when one approaches the apparent source of these images, the “short lane of fountains”, one finds that they are adorned with icons celebrating their artifice: “fake bronze medals...often half hidden by the lichen”. The images on these medals are multiple and in fact repeat the list which was evoked by the lane of fountains. In taking on the shape of what is engraved on them, the “medals” also seem to suggest that, even this close to the source of desire, images give their shape to any experience of the Real.

Dali also assures one that behind perceptual reality,

There were still other lanes
 Where for centuries
 Ancient simulacra remained deposited
 Untidily
 And corresponding to the most diverse and sometimes anachronistic
 representations
 (129)

Here Dali suggests that if one examines the way in which desire has been articulated throughout human experience one may get a sense of the arbitrariness and malleability of the simulacra used to shape it. His opinion is that, in retrospect, “ancient simulacra” will seem somewhat “anachronistic” to a representation of desire as we understand it currently. The point he is making seems to be that these now “ancient” representations form a sort of cultural substratum, which, if surveyed, will serve to show how simulacra, and consequently perceptual reality and desire, have been replaced and manipulated. This in turn indicates that these simulacra have no fixed or inherent value, but that their

value is determined by their ability to evoke, for a time and by metaphoric means, the ideals of the imaginary or the Real which brought them to life.

In uncovering determinate simulacra behind a symbolic reality one gets a sense of the double image which is the subject of much of Dali's work. Our perception is located at the centre of a metaphor brought about by two systems of representation. Experience is not solely determined by either system, but established in the sliding between them. This in turn fosters awareness of an ideal (and perhaps the Real on which that ideal depends) initiated by a profound sense of its absence in such slippage of meaning. Our perception in many ways exists as a relief copy of our infantile ideals.

In paranoiac deconstruction and reconstruction, one is really only given a choice between different kinds of artificiality. In the poem Dali not only gives the Grand Masturbator two faces, he expands the frame again to show one "two Grand Masturbators" (122) and also lists dozens of images which populate the lanes leading to this epitome of ambiguity. Yet this unstable image of the Grand Masturbator is simultaneously powerful enough to underlie and determine Dali's reality. Its power is that it represents, and thereby also obscures, for Dali, a universal ideal. Fundamental experience still remains inaccessible for Dali, however, as these simulacra cannot stand up to desire, providing no satisfaction for his infantile obsessions as he only ever finds here "real chocolate" (chocolate becoming, for Dali, a substitute for faeces) and "fake shit" (123).

Lacan will echo Dali's position in his interpretation of Freud's example of cynical humour. He uses it to show that despite the subject's discourse being as "fake" as the series of representations which underpin and depend on it, this speech does give the analyst an insight into which simulacra have been determinate for the patient. In the effect which therapeutic discourse has on these forms, the analyst is able to reconstruct and manipulate the representations which have shaped the patient's perceptions and therein his reality.

the art of the analyst must be to suspend the subject's certitudes until their last mirages have been consumed. And it is in the discourse that, like verse, their resolution must be scanned...Even if it communicates nothing, the discourse represents the existence of communication; even if it denies the obvious, it affirms that the Word constitutes the Truth; even if it is destined to deceive, here the discourse speculates on faith in testimony. ("The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis", 13)

It is interesting to note though that Lacan, in re-presenting the Freudian joke, “lies”, making the “true” destination Lemberg rather than Cracow (“Analysis and Truth or The Closure of the Unconscious”, 140). Why is he telling us Lemberg, when we know that it is Cracow to which the man was really travelling? His “joke” here recalls Freud’s while simultaneously misrepresenting it. Although the signifiers are “destined to deceive” he has preserved the terms of truth established by the structure of signification which operated in Freud’s joke. These are, in turn, the terms of truth which accord with the structure of representation in psychoanalytic therapy: depiction by the opposite.

In doing this Lacan indicates that we should, in fact, read Lemberg as Cracow. The man says he is going to Lemberg, but in doing so he indicates what his original destination was, proving that the truth is traceable if we acknowledge the structure which the deceit takes part in. Once this is recognised, it is also acknowledged that this deceit constituted the truth, in conveying that structure, all along. Truth is shown to be a product of signifying structure and therefore unable to exist independently of it.

It is in the signs which the subject misrecognises as truth that “truth” can be recovered in the metonymic displacement which these signs determine in the subject. In decomposing the range of metaphorical substitutions operating in the signs of the subject, one begins to approach the truth contained in that signification, or perhaps more accurately, the truth which that signification establishes in the subject. To Dali these significations are both determinate and fertile: “famous fountains...fixed from childhood in the tide of their unconscious images” (124).

It becomes clear that Dali’s oeuvre sought to undermine the symbols it established at the very moment at which they took on form. In constantly shifting the frames of reference of his work, in mirroring but adjusting certain representations, he also impacted on any pattern and hence any “truth” which may have been discerned in his work. This allies his work far more with Lacanian conceptions concerning the vacillation between systems of representation than a mulish reproduction of the figures of Freudian theory. He uses Freud’s metaphors to deconstruct reality and, in turn, deconstructs them by manipulating them into his own forms. In consequence of Dali’s own considerable consciousness and awareness of the process he was employing, perhaps the most erroneous path is to follow a line of investigation which seeks to find psychoanalytic signifiers winking at one behind Dali’s own and equating the two. Dali’s ideals transcended both Freudian imagery and his own representations of it.

It is evident, however, that he was helped to such awareness by classic Freudian theory, which Finkelstein is quick to point out.

Dali's reading of Freud may have endowed with a somewhat more distinct form and meaning what was otherwise felt to be a chaotic pattern of desires, anxieties, and all kinds of conflicting claims, of which Dali was only partly conscious. (129)

One prime example of this for Finkelstein is the figure of William Tell which recurs throughout Dali's work, including "The Grand Masturbator". He asserts that the William Tell figure was an image of immense power for Dali, "embodying for him the theme of the threatening castrating father" (108). Consequently, Finkelstein terms Dali's imagery an "evolving 'Aesthetics of Regression'" (107), citing as justification Dali's preoccupation with the dominance of the pleasure principle and the infantile organisation of instincts which it provides for.

Of particular importance to Dali were Freud's observations that the disposition to perversion is to be found, at least partially, in "what passes as the normal constitution" and that it is only in children that such a constitution...is to be found. (130)

For Finkelstein, Dali advocates nothing other than a return to these instincts, which certainly does suit the profile of the paranoiac as one that demonstrates a return to forms of infantile sexuality. Such a will to return may be evident in Dali's rejection of the inhibiting factors necessitated by the ego-ideal and the structures which he saw as fulfilling this function in society: "Dali tended to see these developments [those concerning inhibition]...in terms of strictures and interdictions imposed by any kind of authority, social, religious, or familial" (130). For Dali, in keeping with Freud's assertions, these "developments" also became synonymous with the paternal function and the deprivation of narcissistic pleasures in the genital "tyranny" of the Oedipal stage. Finkelstein claims that Dali "viewed himself with enough clarity to know that he had not attained the phase of culturally acceptable and fully integrated genital organisation"(130).

Yet I would argue Dali's lucidity stretched even further to acknowledge that his possible "infantile fixations" and hence "perversions", were structured by and in their symbolic representation. Although perversion, for Dali, does present an opportunity to overthrow an established mode of determinate representation, and so approach underlying ideals through the exposition and exploitation of imaginary signifiers, it is by no means a mere return to such ideals. Dali's images represent a restructuring of the

terms used to channel the ideals of infantile sexuality and, in doing so, give alternative shapes to those ideals. The ideals, like the Real which predates them, are only articulated in a representation which displaces and moulds them.

Dali's refusal to limit an ideal to any one definitive image and so close that ideal off from the play of representation, bring him far closer to Lacanian thinking. Yet it also means that both he and Lacan had followed Freud's lead in this:

In that respect there is no distinction between perverse and normal sexuality other the fact that their dominant component instincts and consequently their sexual aims are different. In both of them, one might say, a well-organized tyranny has been established, but in each of the two a different family has seized the reins of power. Infantile sexuality, on the other hand, lacks, speaking generally, any such centring and organization. (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 365)

This also concurs with Lacan's thesis where he posits paranoia as a system or an alternative organisation rather than a lack of structure or a deficiency in the systematic elements of the personality. It also reflects Dali's belief that paranoia is a systematisation and not the escape from the compulsion to systematise. Significantly both Dali and Lacan saw these systems as deriving their form from the representations which had initiated them. Dali makes use of Freud's system but also underscores it with his own symbolic organisation, thereby vacillating between two systems.

This interplay between two kinds of "fake" introduces in the subject an appreciation for the ideal. Yet the ideal and the Real which it indicates in relief, are only apprehended in the essence which all the "fakes" manage to evoke through the pattern and history of their substitution. Like the meaning of a metaphor, the ideal exists in none of the terms used to represent it but in the relationship established between them. In the same way as the "soul", it can only take on material proportions in a misleading and often actively opposed form. Indeed the myth of soul may be an alternative representation of this process.

At "the end of the path", behind the first image of the "Grand Masturbator", Dali indicates that one only really uncovers another image of the "Grand Masturbator". The second image, however, is "slightly besmirched/with real shit" representing perhaps, that he is closer to the sources of infantile sexuality as he does show traces of one of its insignia (simulacra). Yet the images of the Great Masturbator still seek to "render invisible, or at least unnoticeable, the desirable horror of this flesh" with their "cruel

ornaments of fake gold” (122-123). The imaginary may more successfully invoke the ideal but ultimately also obscures it in its representations.

The imaginary depictions of the ideals which act as the sources of further unconscious and conscious representations (Dali’s “famous fountains”) are also significantly “attached/to the death principle” (124). Here Dali shows an awareness of Freud’s article “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (first published in 1920) in which Freud introduced his conception of a “death instinct” or principle to accompany and rival the “pleasure principle”.

In “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, Freud asserts that sexual instincts provide for a will to unity, “our sexual instincts would coincide with the Eros of the poets and philosophers which holds all living things together” (323). The death instinct becomes that which represents “the most universal endeavour of all living substance – namely to return to the quiescence of the inorganic world” (336). In attaching his unconscious imagery to the death principle, Dali is suggesting that these simulacra, in their evocation of the ideal, mask and indicate a further desire - one for disintegration: “decomposition/of rotting donkeys/of rotting horses/of rotting cats/of rotting horses/of rotting mouths/of rotting chickens/of horrible rotting roosters...” (124).

Paranoia is a return to the process which structured the personality and it makes this process available to perception through a symbolic representation (delusion) which is experienced as both real and determinate for the subject. Inasmuch as paranoia represents repetition experienced as an actual return to “an earlier state of things” (“Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, 308), its ultimate manifestation must then be one which displays elements of decomposition or disintegration. Dali’s poem hints that imaginary simulacra hide a Real that is characterised by destructive drives. His figures of William Tell and The Grand Masturbator merge as he regressively stretches forth towards a moment of primary identification which contains the pleasure and death principles in one figure of alienating desire. In this way, for Lacan too, the primary narcissistic ideal is also the first rival and it is this encounter which sets the course of the Oedipal moment: “the way is prepared for it by a primary identification that structures the subject as a rival with himself” (Aggressivity in psychoanalysis”, 22).

There is a sense, then, in which Dali is, through his work, a universal analyst treating a universal (un)consciousness. To submit to Dali’s art may (momentarily) threaten to cure us of our common paranoia with regard to reality (were that feasible), and even to reconnect us with our own lost past, the one which precedes our delusion

(were that not irretrievably gone). He, just like the Lacanian analyst, can give us access to the shapes which dominate and determine our perception so that we might re-articulate both.

Dali refers to the paranoid-critical process in which the determinate images underlying his reality are noted and depicted, as similar to photographic development (*The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 142). His “critical lucidity” is able to fix the components of the “instantaneous paranoiac act” and in this “records their evolution and production”. Before reality is able to seal itself up again, Dali is able to pilfer some of the “ornaments of fake gold” which brand the fountains of unconscious images.

Recall that Lacan describes the photographic quality of paranoiac delusion as a film which has become frozen at a certain point, documenting the junctures of development, becoming a record of sorts.

Dali’s task is difficult as he attempts to show the fluid metaphorical interchange of subliminal images by means of a fixed objective form. This difficulty in depiction is picked up by Finkelstein who reflects on his attempts at representing a double image: “This is accomplished by slight shadows and reflections, but also – and this is where Dali strays from the demands of theory – by pronounced anatomical distortions” (190). This dilemma also leads to an interesting effect in some of his pictures, which is in keeping with Lacan’s reflections on the cinematic quality of paranoia, in that “there is a metamorphosis from one image to another which gives it the sense of lying half-way between an animated sequence and a painting” (Ades, *Dali and Surrealism*, 126).

Lacan’s style of speaking and writing also needs to fulfil such a requirement in that it must indicate the paranoiac process and yet resist delusional fixation. In this way his prose is only ever momentarily resolved into definition, within the context of a page or paragraph perhaps. Any such “definition” is soon compromised as other potential meanings or referents are introduced beneath or alongside any single or multiple terms. His prose vacillates between closure and remaining open to an alternative representation. Perhaps this is also the reason why he preferred for the most part of his career not to fix anything in print but only to deliver lectures.

Says Dali, “The truth of it is that my paranoiac force projected a series of images that I consciously apprehended and tried to concretize. I am neither copyist nor image maker, but am delirious” (*The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 142). The paranoiac is both copyist and image-maker simultaneously in the sense that he both produces and records (or passively perceives) the delusion. Yet he is generally

unconscious of engaging in either activity because the critical system used to interpret the delusion is also its origin.

However, the fact that the paranoiac's delusion does mirror the organisation of his personality and therein his critical and perceptual faculties, does allow the Lacanian analyst an insight into the systematisation that all three obey. The paranoiac unconsciously creates the significations which will become real and seemingly omnipotent in the delusion. The average subject is not a stranger to this phenomenon, as the ego, which is the paranoid construction that the normal subject establishes as real, is also not perceived as a fiction but as a very real presence that is recorded as identity.

The true genius of Dali's critical faculty and Lacan's style is that they both seem able to resist as absolute the images which their "paranoia" produces. It is apparent that Dali recognises the sliding of his images along a metaphorical axis in conjunction with his paranoiac realisation that they are capable of producing concrete reality. It is appropriate then that Dali's works, of the period 1929-1930 in particular, illustrate, as Finkelstein suggests, (107) metaphor at a visual level. It can also be argued further, that in keeping with this thesis's assertions on metaphor, each painting is at once dialectical and a challenge to any implicit narrative.

III. July 1930: They Meet

From Dali's early works it is possible to gain an impression of the development of his theories on paranoia and even at some points to identify where he may have pre-empted or paralleled the thought of Lacan. It is certainly clear that in his more radical positions he predicted later Lacanian conceptions concerning paranoia. For example, Dali maintained that it was a paranoiac process which furnished the objects of perception and thereby indicated the systematisation at the base of self and reality. Furthermore he was able to conceive of this systematisation as one made up of metaphorical images which always simultaneously belied and disguised underlying ideals. These ideals were, in turn, formed in response to various aggressive and disparate drives or instincts.

We have already touched on some aspects of the meeting between the two figures which took place, presumably, in July 1930, though the event itself remains somewhat of a blank page, its influence characterised in differing ways by various critics and historians. As with Lacan, it is however possible to identify Dali's thoughts at this

time regarding paranoia and thus present oneself with a scope of what might have passed between the artist and the psychiatrist.

The debate concerning the primacy of influence then between Dali and Lacan (artist and scientist) hinges closely upon the content of their actual meeting. Unfortunately, what commentators have to say on the event primarily reflects their prior discursive loyalties. The space opened up by the absence of any concrete record of such an encounter puts one in mind of that evoked by Dali's double images, inducing the will to systematise an indivisible narrative.

Finkelstein allies Dali's discourse on paranoia with that which prioritises "disorder" as a value, arguing that his emphasis on the simultaneity of delusion and interpretation denied the idea that paranoia was the reaction of reason against organic flaws and rather an active ordering mechanism equal to conscious convention.

In other words, the paranoid delirium associates different realities by exploring them irrationally, and forms a systematic structure that, in itself, is an interpretation of these elements in the context of the new relationships formed between them. (187)

According to Finkelstein Dali "found *full corroboration* of his ideas in Jacques Lacan's doctoral thesis"(187) in that Lacan also argued that paranoid delusion sprang from a systematisation of the personality and thus could not be easily separated from that personality. Furthermore Lacan had linked this systematisation to encounters with "real" phenomena: "His point of departure was the actuality of the delusion with its empirically observable structures of development" (187). Finkelstein quotes Dali's 1933 praise for both the serious examination of the phenomenology of the paranoid delusion ("truly phenomenological essence"), something implicit in Lacan's thesis, as well as the realisation that paranoid systematisation was a "force and power operating at the base of the phenomenon of personality" (187). No longer was the paranoid theoretically caught between a faulty constitution and an interpretation which attempted to make up for it, but was shaped by an initial response to material phenomena, a reaction which, in turn shaped other phenomena.

Yet Finkelstein goes on to say that in 1930, at the date of publication of "The Rotting Donkey", "ideas regarding the 'consubstantiality' of the delirium and the interpretation were not yet uppermost in Dali's mind, even though such a phenomenon would provide *full corroboration* of their veracity" (189). He proceeds to relegate this notion to Dali's work of 1933. Thus it would seem that he is suggesting that Lacan's

thought gave shape to Dali's phantoms. The assertion is that Dali's indefinite approach to paranoia found form rather than *full corroboration* in Lacan's thesis, especially as Finkelstein in this regard relies on a comparison between Dali's conceptions in an article from *Le Minotaure* in 1933, "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus", and those of Lacan from his thesis of 1932. Here Finkelstein belies his true opinion, which he hints at when he says: "It has been suggested that Lacan himself was influenced to a certain extent by Dali's earlier promulgation of his theory in *The Rotting Donkey*. Be that as it may..." (187). It is that "be that as it may" which leads one to the footnote in which Finkelstein underscores the text one has just read. Here he indicates that two scholars, one of whom is Roudinesco, both "attest to the fact that Lacan phoned Dali after having read *The Rotting Donkey* and asked to meet him, and that in the ensuing meeting Dali explained to Lacan his notions regarding paranoia. I have found no documentation of this presumed meeting" (297).

He proceeds to inform one, correctly, that Dali, in *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali*, instead remembers the article which Lacan read as having been one published in 1937 ("I was thirty-three") and as one entitled, "The Inner Mechanism of Paranoiac Activity" (17). Yet Finkelstein also adds that this representation is inaccurate: "Dali seems to be slightly confused both in reference to the title of the essay as well as his age at the time, and thus this evidence remains somewhat suspect" (297). He accuses Dali of fabricating the invitation to a meeting from Lacan after his encounter with "The Rotting Donkey", stating that "it would have been in Dali's interest to show that his own influence on Lacan dates back to the appearance of *The Rotting Donkey*; because he does not corroborate this fact in his autobiography, it would stand to reason that the later date is closer to the mark" (297).

Yet it surely counts against Finkelstein's opinion that there is no further particular effort visible to corroborate such "retrospective fantasizing" in Dali's autobiography, especially if such a ruse was of great importance to him¹⁴. Be that as it may, it becomes evident from a serious examination of Dali's theory prior to the publication of Lacan's thesis that he had pre-empted the Lacanian position. Furthermore he had already indicated a radical position regarding paranoia that Lacan would only be capable of

¹⁴ Roudinesco also relates a meeting between Dali and Lacan in New York in 1975, learnt of from an interview with a third source. In this lunch appointment, Dali recalled the meeting in 1930, asking of Lacan "Why didn't you say anything that time we met and I had a bandage on my nose?" "Because I knew there wasn't anything wrong with you." "Fantastic! You're the only one who didn't say anything!" (378). Yet it

incorporating *fully* into scientific discourse two decades later. Indeed Lacan may very well have watered down Dali's ideas at the tentative stages of his career. For example, in his thesis,

He was careful not to quote the relevant sources, never even mentioned any of the great surrealist texts that lay behind his own, and made no reference to Dali, Breton...He was anxious about his career and didn't want to offend either his masters in psychiatry, who rejected the literary avant-garde, or the supporters of orthodox Freudianism, of whom he was still a disciple.
(Roudinesco, 56)

Dali, in work prior to 1932, had indicated a systematisation within identity which not only constructed that identity but also, through a process of violent signification, altered the form of external phenomena. It was this active aspect, especially regarding phenomenology, which Ades cites as an example of the shared viewpoints of Dali and Lacan. She reminds her readers that Dali had introduced his ideas surrounding paranoia as early as 1930, "and therefore independently of Lacan" (122), but that he found "major support" in Lacan's thesis "because it emphasises the active and 'concrete' nature of the [paranoid] phenomenon in psychological terms" (124). She then offers this quote from Dali's article, "Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus" (1933), in which he praised Lacan's thesis:

Lacan's work perfectly gives an account of the objective and "communicable" hyperacuity of the phenomenon, thanks to which the delirium takes on this tangible character, which is impossible to contradict, and which places it at the very antipodes of the stereotypes of automatism and dream. (124)

The only significant difference in Dali's approach from that prior to Lacan's thesis is the increased emphasis on the active character of the paranoid-critical method which now stands in contradistinction to passive states. In "The Rotting Donkey" he had claimed that that *both* passive and active means should operate "simultaneously" to "contribute to the total discredit of the world of reality" (115). Yet even this shift is not altogether unprecedented, as in "The Rotting Donkey" he had pointedly insisted on the "*active* and paranoiac character" of his new-found process. In shifting his emphasis he was following the call Breton had articulated in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* to become more active in transforming reality, to engage in the transformation of matter

must be remarked that this does not quite accord with Dali's autobiography where he claims that it was a slip of paper which he had attached, almost unwittingly, while working.

and not only mind, “crossing over the gap that separates absolute idealism from dialectical materialism” (Breton, “What is Surrealism?”, 117).

Dali’s work in 1930 had pointed out the folly in not recognising the dialectic implicit in the images which our perceptions propose as reality. This is in essence his theory of the double image, which is an attempt to depict the dialectic process which underlies the objects of our world. This dialectic leaves “reality” ultimately at the mercy of its interaction with the patterns of signification which run through our conscious and unconscious minds. He indicated that paranoid-criticism uses the pre-established forms of objects in order to assert itself, but hijacks – in order to alter that object – the dialectical system of signification operating in perception just before an object appears to consciousness as fixed. The double image arises out of the simultaneous existence, in our perception, of two forms of the same object. This effect is in essence a condensation of the images which usually slide imperceptibly below our objects but which have now been fixed and made available to consciousness through Dali’s paranoia.

Yet Dali does not fixate on any one metaphoric representation of the imaginary as the clinical paranoid would, but uses this method to obtain any number of so-called “realities”. He uses this evidence to issue a challenge to the materialists, “of knowing which one of these images [obtained in paranoid activity] has a greater number of possibilities for existence if the intervention of desire is taken into consideration,” and states his suspicion that possible representations and the range of corresponding “realities” are endless.

He confirms his ideas on the phenomenological character of paranoia in his 1933 article, “Paranoiac-critical Interpretation of the Obsessive Image of Millet’s Angelus”, arguing that paranoid-criticism was “proof of the dialectical value of that principle of verification through which the element of delirium passes practically into the tangible domain of action” (quoted in Ades, *Dali and Surrealism*, 124). To be raised to the level of the perceptible real, the paranoid idea must become fixed (stabilised in a metaphorical signification), however temporarily, and thereby leave behind the endless play of multiple unconscious representations. As we have seen, the evident artificiality of Dali’s double images is an indication of the difficulty of effectively depicting the slippery chains of unconscious substitution in a real which actively seeks to deny such ambiguity to perception.

Conventional reality may appear fixed to the regulated eye of the ego, but its virtue is that ultimately it is in constant flux, that despite the fact that Zeno’s arrow never

seems to move it remains on target: “Objectivity is but a snare and a delusion: in truth, merely a relationship of forces in *temporary* suspension” (*The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 144, emphasis added). The power of paranoid perception is that it deconstructs before it fixates, thereby giving one who is critically aware of what is going on, an opportunity to observe the interplay behind reality: “in all finality I believe that the real is but eternal becoming” (144). Yet in practising paranoid deconstruction one must needs beware, as one must always resist the temptation to close that play and become fixated on a single representation of the ideal

It is the role of the therapist, as envisaged by Lacan, to ensure that, after accessing the imaginary vocabulary of the patient, the points of (re)fixation concur with those of convention. Play here must be arrested “properly” (a case of falling into the right trap) through the controlled inducement of paranoia in the patient.

In many ways Ades’ point about the phenomenological capabilities of paranoia, and Finkelstein’s about Dali’s concern with the “consubstantiality” of delusion and interpretation, overlap. This is because for Dali, and also Lacan, the phenomenology of the delusion has been determined by the system of forms and representations which constitutes the paranoid’s personality and which both his experience and interpretation testify to. I think that this was the suggestion of Dali’s theory as early as his work in 1930.

Roudinesco certainly believes that Dali’s influence on Lacan was decisive, arguing that 1931 was the year in which

his encounter with Dali began to have its effect. It soon led him to reject automatism and place the full anthropological significance of madness at the centre of the human mind. Thus every so often the thesis on paranoia that he completed in the autumn of 1932 reveals a tendency to appropriate the positions of the surrealists. (56)

Furthermore she asserts that it was Dali’s “The Rotting Donkey”, which “made it possible for Lacan to break with the theory of constitutionalism and move on to a new understanding of language as it related to psychosis. Dali was putting forward a novel thesis on paranoia” (31). She describes his theory as one which demonstrated that “delusion is already an interpretation of reality, and paranoia a creative activity dependent on logic” (31). This reflects Dali’s insistence that paranoia was a systematisation that determined its own representations, and therein its phenomena, just as a “normal” or logical systematisation resulted in conventional reality. Indeed Roudinesco goes so far as to suggest that, had it not been for the surrealists, and

perhaps Dali in particular, Lacan “might have been imprisoned forever within the confines of psychiatry and an academic understanding of Freud” (89).

Certainly some of Lacan’s founding ideas were not only derived from Dali but it becomes increasingly clear that Dali was one of Lacan’s first, most enduring and decisive influences. Despite this the meeting between the artist and the scientist remains, as we have seen, itself subject to “paranoiac” misrecognition. Finkelstein with his stake in the academicism of art history evidently favours the respectability of the scientist, as does Bowie, while Roudinesco’s project of biography colours Lacan’s life with the influence of the artist. Ades acknowledges only that they had read each other’s work, suggesting an exchange of ideas, but leaves an examination of Lacan’s work outside the framework of her examination of Dali.

The various depictions of the importance of the meeting between the two figures is perhaps an example of how radically interpretation and its resultant signification can determine history and its “phenomena”. It becomes clear, however, that Dali and Lacan’s theories accommodate each other. The indication certainly seems to be that Dali’s influence was what encouraged Lacan’s own views on paranoia. That Lacan was more in a position to bring these conceptions to fruition in a scientific framework is beyond question.

IV. A United Front: The Dialectic and the Materialism of Dali’s Paranoiac Method

Roudinesco concurs that Dali’s paranoiac technique coincided with the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* and its call that “a new field of operations must be found in political action. The old chimera of changing mankind must take concrete form; what was needed was a new technique for arriving at a knowledge of reality” (Roudinesco, 89). Dali’s new method was just what the surrealists had been searching for as it made tangible in material terms the alternative reality which they proclaimed in the name of revolution.

After the crisis within Surrealism of 1929, which Breton’s Second Surrealist Manifesto had attempted to resolve, an urgent need was felt for something to draw the group together. Dali and a young Marxist member of the surrealist group, André Thirion, were detailed to organise a commission to put forward definite proposals for communal action. Dali...proposed the Surrealist object, and

thus inaugurated a new and fruitful period of Surrealist activity which lasted through the thirties. (Ades, *Dali and Surrealism*, 152)

At this stage of his career Dali did not demonstrate the open contempt for the communists which he would later maintain. Indeed, Finkelstein indicates that “As André Thirion, a prominent member of the French Communist Party and a writer, remembers, Dali had no objection to having his ideology...integrated into the framework of dialectical materialism”. Finkelstein attributes this to Dali’s attempts at recognition and describes it as “something like a game for him, in which he had to manoeuvre between the outward profession of political faith and his natural bent for provocation” (122).

Nonetheless Dali’s introduction of the surrealist object was seen as a step towards combating the extreme idealism of Surrealism and in this way an attempt at bridging the gap between surrealist and Marxist practice. It is important to examine the implications of surrealist objects in terms of Dali’s paranoiac method and his conceptions regarding dialectical materialism. The potential materiality of Dali’s method is, as we shall see, no doubt what appealed to the young card-carrying David Gascoyne.

Dali’s concern with the materiality of surrealist practice is evidenced as early as 1929 in his “Review of Anti-Artistic Trends”, an article which arose from the considerable influence exerted on Dali by a 1924 piece by Breton, “Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality”: “Here, he [Breton] discusses the possible fabrication of objects which should enter the real world like any book or toothbrush, but which would have no obviously discernible function. Fetishism alone, he suggests, could understand the desire for the palpable verification of poetic as opposed to a utilitarian fact” (Ades, *Dali and Surrealism*, 156). Dali’s article does very little other than to summarise and support the suggestions made by Breton’s argument, but does indicate Dali’s concern with concretising surrealist practice.

This concern would again be articulated in his article, “Surrealist Objects”, of December 1931. Here he introduces “Objects which Function Symbolically” as one of a range of categories he establishes for surrealist objects. The objects are for Dali the representation of desire and in this capacity they are also given the power to reciprocally direct or shape that desire: “the object itself and the phantasms unleashed in its operation always constitute a new and absolutely unknown series of perversions, and consequently of poetic phenomena” (136). Desire here includes social and commercial desire, but Dali’s response is to equate this with the sexual: as in Lacan, all desire is one to him.

Dali also maintains that desire always “objectifies” itself, but in doing so is only ever “enacted symbolically” through “substitution and metaphor”, adding that the “process typical of sexual perversion...resembles, in every respect, the process of the poetic phenomenon” (136). A particular “perversion” Dali had in mind was no doubt the fetishism Breton brought to his notice in 1924,

Do not forget if for no other reason the belief in a certain practical necessity prevents us from ascribing to poetic testimony an equal value to that given, for instance, to the testimony of an explorer. Human fetishism, which must try on the white helmet, or caress the fur bonnet, listens with an entirely different ear to the recital of our expeditions. It must thoroughly believe that it has really happened. (“Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality”, 26)

This forms the basis of what Breton termed the “desire for perpetual verification”. What Dali does is to explicitly link desire and the way it is manifested in representation with a figure of speech, namely metaphor. Indeed, for Dali, and later Lacan, existence as we consciously experience it, consists only of metaphorical substitutions for more original figures of desire. What the fetishist displays is a further substitution at a conscious level, altogether “metaphorical” in that this substitution both displaces and indicates that which it replaces:

Through the use of the fetish, the practitioner is able to continue to believe the false, while also knowing that it cannot be true, since it does require a substitution. The practitioner both knows and doesn’t know simultaneously. (Gamman et al, *Female Fetishism*, 46)

In a sense then for both Dali and Lacan, the objects of our world all become, in essence, fetishist objects inasmuch as they symbolically substitute for the simulacra of the imaginary which underpin them and still maintain the line of desire. The major difference between the fetishist and the normal subject is that he institutes a further step in the semiological order with his secondary substitution. Yet in our objects we too both know and “don’t” know simultaneously. To regard even the primary substitution, which the objects of our perceived world constitute, as if it were the real thing is to be paranoid, which for Lacan is the natural tendency of the ego and therefore perception. To make determinate alternative substitutions from conventional ones is to be discordant and appear clinically paranoid, whereas to do so repeatedly and not become trapped in a substitution is to engage in critical paranoia.

Dali feels that through the manufacture of alternative surreal objects one can highlight to consciousness the “unconscious thoughts which appear behind the

rudimentary simulacrum of phenomena” and through a change in representation perhaps even “modify” (“Surrealist Objects”, 136) these thoughts. The result is, in any case, to transfigure the real.

David Gascoyne translated Dali’s next significant work dealing with surrealist objects, “The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment” (in 1932). Here Dali quotes directly from Breton’s call for the manufacture of objects and his suggestion that:

It is at least possible that the poet’s creations are destined very soon to assume such tangibility and so most queerly to displace the limits of the so-called real. I certainly think that one must no longer underrate the hallucinatory power of some images or the imaginative gift some men possess independently of their ability to recollect. (90)

Dali summarises the gist of the piece as well as that of the “second phase of surrealist experiment” as being one which contained an “intentional element” which “tended more and more to tangible verification and emphasised the possibilities of a growing relation to everydayness” (90). He suggests the change in the surrealist’s attitude by modifying the title of a picture by Max Ernst from “Revolution by Night” to “Revolution by Day” indicating that the revolution had obtained a far greater sense of returning the surrealist experiment to the realm of objectivity.

[I]t cannot be denied that there is a dialectical potentiality in the fancy whereby the title of Max Ernst’s picture, “Revolution by Night,” is converted into “Revolution by Day” (such an apt motto for the second phase of surrealist experiment!), it being understood and emphasized that the day meant must be the exclusive day of dialectical materialism. (90)

Dali concerns himself with the “system of interferences” he sees operating between the forms of the unconscious and their “road to the object” (91) or route to objective perception. Dali indicates that real objects may well act as a symbolic means of communication between the unconscious and conscious mind, thereby representing a material dialectic: “Through the new relation thus established our eyes see the light of things in the external world...we are led to regard the world of objects, the objective world, as the true and manifested content of a new dream” (91). Using Feuerbach, Dali goes further to suggest that the “objective self” (91) like its objects also constitutes such a means of communication which carries within its symbolic status the “possible body which can be incarnated in this communication”, something which Dali maintains “haunts surrealism”.

A “splitting of the personality” precipitates this objective self and it is this splitting which, as Dali interprets Feuerbach, brings both the objective self and its objects into the symbolic realm they are destined to occupy. This results in “objects which fulfil the necessity of being open to action by our own hands and moved about by our own wishes” but which also recall a former time of unity. This is the period of unity during which we mistake ourselves as objects and mistake our objects for ourselves.

A heightened awareness of this symbolic nature of reality and its objects (their function as simulacra), brought about by paranoiac processes, will result in a perception of the self as part of the world of significant objects. This perception for Dali initiates a “yearning to form a *whole* with them (objects)...we suddenly find that it does not seem enough to devour things with our eyes and our anxiety to join actively and effectively in their existence brings us to want to *eat them*” (95). The concept of devouring objects no doubt arises from Freud’s notion of objects originally coming to substitute for the mother’s breast, although Dali emphasises a primal feeling of unity with objects as the “objective” self is also an object.

Recall here the ability of the paranoiac to appear *as an object* to himself even remarked upon as early as Freud’s studies. Dali calls for the writing of words on objects as a means towards a “material devouring of things”, not mere “inscription” but writing that would “entirely cover over the complex, tangible and concrete shapes of things” (93). This is a radical “allegorical representation” (Finkelstein, 222) of objects which function symbolically. In this example objects are altered literally in order to indicate that they do, in fact, operate metaphorically. The new terms of the object’s representation (the words inscribed on it) actively impact on the perception of the object, altering its very appearance. This example gives Dali the perfect opportunity to demonstrate his conception of paranoia as that which transfigures the world by altering the terms of the metaphor which it already represents.

Finkelstein goes further to suggest a tendency in Dali’s paranoiac work to promote a “literalization of metaphor” (222), citing as an example of this practice Dali’s *Aphrodisiac Jacket* (1936). The object consisted of “a plain jacket to which were attached fifty glasses of peppermint (according to Dali, a liquor endowed with aphrodisiac properties) in which flies had been dipped”. In examining Dali’s own musings on the object, Finkelstein suggests that the idea behind it is that eroticism can be literally measured here, that “this jacket should enable one to control the distribution of erotic

stimuli over one's body" (221). A metaphorical representation of desire is made concrete here, as is the case with all reality for Dali. This leads Finkelstein to conclude that

Dali's thought exhibits a particular mould which, for lack of a better name, I call metaphoric. It is suffused with symbolic or metaphoric substitutes where a metaphor functions on the level of the real...Metaphoric thought encompasses language, thought, and gesture. It allows language to breed thought and action by concretizing or literalizing metaphors and figures of speech. (221)

In his search for a "better name" Finkelstein seems to overlook the similarity between this element of Dali's work and Lacan's ideas on the nature of paranoid perception. Admittedly, one has already observed Finkelstein's bias concerning the theoretical interaction between Dali and Lacan and therefore it is not surprising that he would not entertain any possible "Dalian" influence in Lacan's ultimately paranoid cosmology. It may be that Dali is hinting at a time in the evolution of the human subject when metaphors were determinate in the construction of the real, a paranoid time to which he favours a radical return. This means that both the conscious self and its objects arose from decisive metaphorical representations, which simultaneously separated object from subject. The irony is that our ego and all its objects which appear so real and fixed to us are ultimately a stabilised metaphorical representation of a time in the imaginary order when we purchased our objects with our being.

The ultimate aim of paranoia for Dali is the reunion of the conscious self with its objects, something which is possible because they are both constructs of the same representational system. This accords with Dali's opinion concerning the consubstantiality of the delusion and the systematisation of the personality which interprets that delusion, as the personality is one of the forms (symbolic simulacra) established in paranoid systematisation. This is the suggestion of Lacan's doctoral thesis which Dali praises as "a complete and homogenous idea of the subject" (Roudinesco, 60).

In eavesdropping on the ever-ongoing dialogue between conscious and unconscious realms, the critical paranoid not only uses the unconscious to manipulate and subvert reality, but also uses the symbolic capacity of reality to *re-present*, and so restructure, the unconscious. In short, critical paranoia impacts on the material real and recognises a metaphoric dialectic which operates between this reality and that which it must recall.

Dali's material dialecticism is one which depends on his "system of interferences", no doubt a series of metaphoric substitutions, which operates between

the symbolic simulacra of the “objective” world and the images of the internal or “subjective” world.

V. Night to Day: The Conquest of the Irrational

“The Conquest of the Irrational”, generally acknowledged by critics as the “most complete discussion of the paranoiac-critical activity” (Ades, *Dali and Surrealism*, 126) and “perhaps the most accessible of Dali’s accounts of paranoia-criticism” (Finkelstein, 186), was translated by Gascoyne in the same year as it was written by Dali, 1935 (Secrest, 139).

Dali likens the Surrealists to “carnivorous fish who...are swimming between two kinds of water, the cold water of art and the warm water of science”, and suggests that surrealist art and practice, the “vital experience” of the movement, are nothing other than the “caviar of the imagination” which must come to satisfy the irrational hunger which is true desire. Dali argues that such hunger is behind the “affective paternal hungers” which have attempted, “no matter how”, to communicate with a “totemic host” (“The Conquest of the Irrational”, 434).

The “affective hungers” are those which receive sanction in society to the degree that they censure their unconscious sources in misrepresentation. The “host” itself is “totemic” and therefore seems also to be a symbolic substitute incarnated to justify the “paternal hungers” of society. This “totemic host” may in fact be an anticipation of the Lacanian “Name of the Father” which is the “Name” in which all societal appetite is conducted.

The “paternal hungers” then are misrecognitions of desire which cause people to lose themselves in the symbolic representations generated around the original force of desire. The signifiers of maternal desire become translated, through identification with the paternal ideal, into societal signifiers of desire. Dali cites “ideological disorders” as an example of these “false” paternal desires and shows how misdirected desire had resulted, at the time of writing the article, in “vain attempts to bite into the dotting and triumphal sweetness of the plump, atavistic, tender, militarist and territorial back of some hitlerian nurse”. This description suggests the source of the drive which may underlie paternal desires, namely to unite with a maternal figure, but also gives an indication of how destructive and unsatisfying it can be if one mistakes, as the authentic objects of desire, the paternal terms set up around imaginary ones. The symbolic world is, in

essence, reminiscent of a mother who has turned her back, taking with her any hope of sustenance.

Spector's suspicion that there is no correlation for maternal desire in ideology or society is unfounded in Dali's understanding of the dialectic which "paternal" desires represent.

Dali invites his readers to "swallow...the fine, intoxicating and dialectical grape of the caviar" (434) as a first step towards the alternative metaphysics suggested by surrealism. It seems that ultimately Dali wants the world to follow him beyond his depiction of the dialectic implicit in a "symbolic" reality, to a space where an alternative paranoiac systematisation can result in a constant alternative everyday experience.

To this end Dali indicates that the simulacrum-notion served merely as a preamble to "the unrestrainable taste for caviar" (434) and that it must be surrendered in favour of a paranoiac objectivity which will subvert all metaphor in making the real synonymous with imaginary desire. He posits this activity as beyond the scope of psychoanalysis, which he correctly identifies as relying on the symbolic nature of the real. He accuses most surrealist images of "falling into the domain of psychoanalysis" where "they are easily reduced to ordinary logical language" (435), of being prey to psychoanalytic interpretation which can transform them via its particular system of metaphors into rational experience once again. This for Dali means that these images, in not being irreducible cannot be original images of desire.

In abolishing the possibility of symbolism in surrealist work, he seems to be suggesting nothing less than complete capture by the signifiers of the unconscious, transforming them into a real where they no longer slide in their symbolic function, but where they are recognisable only as unequivocal experience. This is the revolution in consciousness which Dali seeks to promote.

Paranoiac-critical activity organises and objectivises in an exclusivist manner the limitless and unknown possibilities of the systematic association of subjective and objective phenomena, which appear to us as irrational solicitations, exclusively in favour of the obsessing idea. (437)

His ideas here seem to be beyond a critical paranoia and are more closely allied with clinical paranoia. Previously, it seemed that his critical paranoia only ever perceived objects in the full range of their substitutive potentiality while here it seems to seek to foreclose any metaphoric play in a concretised reality. This "potentiality" is what no doubt was responsible for what Dali's refers to as the "chimeric character" of most surrealist

images which, in his opinion, “no longer satisfies... ‘principles of verification’... The new delirious images of concrete irrationality tend towards their physical and actual ‘possibility’; they surpass the domain of phantasms and ‘virtual’, psycho-analysable representations” (435-436).

Dali’s critical faculty is that which observes the play behind simulacra opened up by paranoia and arrests it into an alternative reality, the “delirio-critical synthesis” (436), thereby communicating the “irrational subject” of such a world in “concrete” (435) terms. The tangibility and consistency of Dali’s new materialism depends upon the extent to which he can inveigle the critical faculty, “the liquid revealer of images”, into the very images and system it “reveals”.

Here Dali appears to be walking a tightrope; the structure virtually exists independently of man, and yet it is he who brings it into existence through the power of his paranoiac faculty. This structure involves an association of elements that would have been downright arbitrary were it not for the obsessive idea that relates them. Consequently, it implies a convergence of inner human necessity - the obsessive idea - and the external existence - or “becoming” of a whole context of systematic associations. (Finkelstein, 216)

Or as Dali later expressed his paranoiac perception:

The truth, to me, to Dali, is in the magnifying glass I aim at the world, called my eye, through which there takes place an exchange that for that moment is known as real. As for me what I project is truer than true and it is all that is true. (*The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 144)

The images obtained in paranoiac activity must “absolutise” themselves and thereby determine the real; this removes the capacity to engage further in the subliminal interchange of images. The images are now set and are bound to their “mirror” representations as reality. Critical paranoia it seems must surrender, in its final evolution, its sense of irony if it is to engage in an objective revolution.

In many ways Dali’s theory itself is his opus to the activity of critical-paranoia, as in it he attempts, with the “objectivity” afforded by a pseudo-scientific style, to reveal “associations and systematic coherences” which he argues are implicit in experience, itself a “spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based upon the interpretive-critical (sic) association of delirious phenomena” (436). The outcome of paranoiac-critical theory appears to be a metaphysical theory, which, in unlatching the dialectical nature of experience, resolves it into a greater paranoiac structure: “Paranoiac-critical activity no longer considers surrealist phenomena and images by themselves but, on the contrary,

as a coherent whole of systematic and significant relations". (Dali, "The Conquest of the Irrational", 436)

In Lacanian terms this idea of a "whole" is perhaps the greatest indication that Dali's critical faculty has been enchanted by the figures of the imaginary. Indeed if one reads further one discovers Dali speaking of an "obsessing sole" ("The Conquest of the Irrational", 439) which as "structural entity" is implicit in "the conduct of living beings". This "sole" he argues is currently beyond the conceptions of gestalt-theory as this thought does not acknowledge the material capacity of structure. Therefore it cannot perceive the determinate relation between structure and "human behaviour". For Dali there is a common structure to the significations which determine both our identity and our material experience. This structure also relates these to the Real that drives both. The essence of this structure is the dialectical movement of metaphor.

He calls for a "physics of paranoia"¹⁵ which will at last be able to recognise such a structural convergence in its analysis of human and physical relations, a form of "hyper-materialist thought" (439). He indicates that Einstein has lead the way in making time and space malleable, once again assimilable to the irrational subject, so soft and edible in Dali's view, in fact, that he makes of them the "camembert" of his seminal "soft watches" (441).

The dialectical whole which Dali aims at achieving in his final paranoid synthesis between objective and subjective experience is echoed stylistically in the book by the way in which he presents his ostensibly scientific argument: in verse form. This playing with form puts one in mind of Lacan's own theoretical style and Clement's comment that such language is "Open, first of all, to invention to words that do not yet exist. Open too

¹⁵ It is worthwhile to note that chaos theory resembles Dali's "paranoid physics" in many of its conceptions, and that this may be approximate to what he called for as early as 1935. It too searches for "associations and systematic coherences" and seeks to give a pattern to that which appears as chance: "Paranoiac-critical activity is an organizing and productive force of objective chance" (Dali, "The Conquest of the Irrational", 436). This meta-structure is what chaos theory aims to account for, as one scholar of chaos theory remarks,

Scientists break things apart and look at them one at a time. If they want to examine the interaction of subatomic particles, they put two or three together. There is complication enough. The power of self-similarity, though begins at much greater levels of complexity. It is a matter of looking at the whole.

(Gleick, quoted in Anonymous, *Chaos Theory*, 4).

The author of the Internet paper, *Chaos Theory*, argues that "Because chaos is a science of whole dynamic systems, rather than separate parts, it represents, in effect, an unacknowledged vindication of the dialectical view" (Anonymous, *Chaos Theory*, 3). In addition it may very well offer a vindication of Dali's ontological speculation here. Dali's "scientific metaphysics" (Wood, 57) differs from chaos theory in that he openly appreciates the "dialectical view".

to poetics – which comes to the same thing...Such was the dialectic that Lacan chose for himself” (59).

At the close of his article Dali apologises to his public for only being able to provide them with the totems of caviar and camembert, but assures them that “behind these two superfine simulacrum of imponderability is hiding, in better and better condition, the very well-known sanguinary and irrational grilled cutlet which shall eat us all”. For Dali an underlying “structure” is responsible for the form which all experience of the material world takes. The “authentic hunger” (441) seeks the truth of the material world in comprehending the design of this structure, meaning that, this structure is all that links us with an authentic experience of the world. Any such base experience must come, at last, in a cannibalistic rite, to consume the simulacra which we have set up as identity and reality. The world is pregnant with the irrational subject and the unveiling of the true nature of the material induces its birth. Previously, in “The Object Revealed In Surrealist Experiment”, one was encouraged to devour by metaphor the objects of this world; now it is suggested that these objects in themselves already contain a metaphoric structure of which our identity is a part, and it is this which will devour “us”.

In his “conquest of the irrational” Dali insists on the “concrete materialisation” of “irrational experiences” and also emphasises the active nature of paranoia in altering material reality, although he insists this does not indicate voluntarily directed thought: “The presence of active and systematic elements does not suppose the idea of voluntarily directed thought, nor of any intellectual compromise, for, as we know, in paranoia the active and systematic structure is consubstantial with the delirious phenomena itself” (436). The “systematic structure” has already directed conscious thought in its composition of the ego, thereby removing any voluntary capacity.

Dali predicts that in manipulating the dialectic structure which paranoia is able to uncover in reality, one gains the capacity to alter the terms in it which constitute both the material world as well as our identity. This is not far removed from Lacan’s conception of the role of the therapist as adjusting the systematisation of the personality through tweaking its nodes of paranoiac fixation in order to induce a new world order. In paranoiac activity reality is always obviously allegorical and the allegorical is always potentially real.

It seems ultimately that history has favoured scientific discourse and so emphasized Lacan’s influence on Dali. No doubt there was a significant theoretical exchange which took place but it cannot be ignored that Dali not only comprehended

and appreciated Lacan's innovations, but also pre-empted much of his later thought. It must be mentioned that both theorists also drew from a range of historical precedents and philosophical positions, an examination (or exhumation) of which no doubt would prove fascinating but is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet both Dali and Lacan certainly envisaged "an immanent structure of the human world" (Bowie, 40) and perhaps now it is clear to what extent these structures were similarly conceived.

In both their styles Lacan and Dali seem to suggest that scientific discourse is as paranoiac as poetic discourse: open to invention and retaining the ability to alter the systematisation of the real through manipulating its pre-existing signification. Perhaps it is that scientific discourse is ultimately more paranoiac as it seeks openly to organise the real and locates the order of the physical at its very centre.

Dali paved the way for a brand of surrealism which could answer the call to revolution in its active and transformational potential. He also introduced a surrealism which no longer bound itself purely to artistic acts but saw in the political, social and material an unconscious organisation articulating itself, and also potentially open to re-articulation.

VI. How to Become Paranoid (Critical)

Paranoia, at last, becomes for Dali that which unites the objective and subjective; psychological and physical; conscious and unconscious; real and unreal; empirical and theoretical in a structure to cosmology which locates us in our objects and our objects in us.

I believe that the universe around us is but a projection of our paranoia, an enlarged image of the world we carry within us, I think that the object of our eyes isolate from the real or that we invent is a pure expression of our delirium crystallized. A simple secretion.
(*The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 144)

By 1976, the date of publication of *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, Dali was speaking of the omnipotence of his power, of "being in touch with the cosmic soul" (Bowie, 40). In doing so perhaps he was demonstrating the fate of narcissus: trapped in the images in the mirror of the imaginary, "I believe my paranoia is an expression of the absolute structure" (*The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali*, 143). Be that as it may, Dali's theory hailed a new era in surrealist activity and, in its ability to unite the

subjective with the objective, provided for a synthesis between seemingly irreconcilable political and artistic philosophies. It was this latter aspect of his theory which was to find a warm reception across the traditionally cold currents of the English Channel.

Chapter Four

I. Storm in a Fur Teacup: London 1936

In the meantime it does not appear to us impractical to organise in the Four Corners of the earth a fairly extensive scheme of resistance and experiment. This plan, as regards its modes of application, cannot be settled until there has been an interchange of the innermost desires of the live youth of all countries, and an estimate of the subversive forces which may be unleashed when it shall be applied at one given point. Owing to insufficient space at our disposal, this plan can only be hinted at. But beware! Enough if surrealism is restored to its true perspective, and we shall not despair of seeing some day a storm *rising* from within this tea-cup. (André Breton, quoted in Gascoyne, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, 128)

“Surrealism has reached London – a little late it is true, a little dowdy and seedy and down at heel and generally enfeebled...[what] in Paris is decrepit, may yet become fashionable in London” (Quoted in Jean, 369): this was one of the many, mostly unflattering, reviews which greeted the International Surrealist Exhibition which took place in London in June and July 1936. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the exhibition’s “attendance averaged nearly 1,500 a day” and “drew more people than any London art show ever had” (Germain, 39). Advertisements bore the names of Breton and Dali alongside various members of the English surrealist group, including one of the driving forces behind the exhibition, David Gascoyne. His associations with the French Surrealists predated the exhibition and he had published *A Short Survey of Surrealism* eight months before the exhibition in November 1935, in which he suggests possible international co-operation with the French avant-garde:

...there is every reason to believe that surrealism, as a movement, is only just at the end of its earliest stages. If a really wide and properly organised international co-operation can be brought about, as there are signs that it shortly will be, surrealism may become of even more importance to the twentieth century than it already is. (132)

Jean confirms that it was in 1935 that a “great desire to introduce surrealism to England fired the young and enthusiastic poet David Gascoyne” (363) and that this led directly to the foundation of an informal English surrealist group which was to plan the exhibition the following year. Much of the criticism which was heaped on the infant movement came from figures which the surrealists dismissed as

smart society critics, the irretrievable dilettanti who, when they find novelty, call it a “stunt,” and when novelty lasts no longer than they would wish, complain that it

is no longer a stunt. It was a stunt for them ten years ago, during their brief visits to Paris, and they are unhappy to see it in London because it destroys some of their exclusiveness... They know nothing of either Freud or Marx. The most that can be said of them is that their pettiness and ignorance are in good faith. (Quoted in Jean, 370)

The anti-establishment stance of surrealism prompted a fair amount of reaction: "From the bourgeois press there have been all the expected accusations, exploitations of scandal, charges of obscenity etc" (Jean, 370). It was this conventionality of British Society against which Herbert Read, a member of the English group, rallied in his article in *Le Minotaure* of the same year, "Why the English Have No Taste". Here he suggests that there is "a certain ideal of normality to which every Englishman aspires, and to which the whole of his upbringing and education is dedicated", adding that "Psychologists are beginning to suspect that this normality we value so much is no more than the most common neurosis" (67). He goes on to link the death of English "sensibility" with the spread of capitalist manufacture in England, arguing that the English have always only viewed as art that which facilitates corporate convention – used to "encourage manufactures" (67).

All over the world the capitalism has spread its net of mental debauchery, its standardisation of taste, its imposition of material values. But in England the natural instincts have been so long deformed that they no longer function. Sensibility is dead, and the only criterion of judgement is convention: the acceptance of a standard imposed by manufacturers, whose only criterion is profit. (68)

Read asserts that such a "sensibility" is not the province of the privileged but is the authentic experience of being "a cell within the spiritual and economic womb of the community" which has been precluded from English society due to "a new kind of consciousness – the protective mechanism of a mind exposed to criticism" (68). This "new consciousness", a product of the individualism prompted by capitalism, results in turn, in a "shell of normality, a hard opaque exterior which admits no light; beneath which the senses stir like blind maggots" (68). This "false consciousness" is that which rejects "original talent" (67), "For the normal Englishman recognises in his midst, not merely odd fellows who can be dismissed as artists, but also odder fellows...who in poems, articles, books and speeches, revolt against the ideal of normality...Such dangerous eccentrics must be stigmatised, ridiculed, made into figures of fun" (68).

Read toys with the idea that such a defect may in fact be racial and indeed it seems to take on these proportions in the coinage of another author, Lawrence Durrell,

who refers merely to the “English Death” (Caesar, 181). In a journal entry dated October 1937, Gascoyne welcomes this author’s characterisation of the English “condition” commenting on the “wonderful objectivisation [sic] or projection of the absolutely universal squalor and disintegration of the inhabitants of the British Isles” (Gascoyne, *Collected Journals 1936-42*, 139). He goes on to state the divide this has brought about within himself between that which “by instinct, heredity, environment, circumstance, what you will, is altogether implicated in the English death, and the other side, which somehow, blindly, is trying to struggle towards absurdity and life (140). Caesar points to these comments by Gascoyne as an indication of the milieu which prompted Gascoyne to be attracted in his earlier years to both surrealism and communism:

By the time Gascoyne wrote this he had turned away from Surrealism, and had been aware of the “insufficiency of Communism” for some time. But his initial attraction to both this aesthetic theory and political doctrine were integral to his struggle with the “English Death”...They both constitute an extreme rejection of the bourgeois, and, in the case of Surrealism, a flight towards the absurd. (181)

Such feelings of discontent seem to have been prevalent within youthful artistic circles in England at the time. Germain points out that the very first call for a surrealism in England had been predicated on just such a rejection of oppressive tradition. In 1927, in the face of the artistic establishment, a “nineteen-year-old student from France, Edouard Roditi”, attending Oxford, argued that one could battle against imitating the “precision, an obsession with ‘exactly where to place each word’” of writers such as Eliot and Pound by “bringing an element of chance into poetry. This element of chance is surrealism” (Germain, 38).

By the time surrealism had made it across the English channel in 1936, however, it was in its second phase which downplayed the “element of chance”, integral to the automatism of its “intuitive epoch” (116), in favour of what Breton called its “reasoning phase” (117) in his 1934 lecture, “What is Surrealism?”¹⁶. As observed in Chapter 2, this change was necessitated by the political flux of the time, which saw the surrealists seeking political legitimisation through employing Marxist theory, claiming to be “fellow-travellers” (Gascoyne, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, 119) on the path to revolution. Surrealism was seen as capable of transforming the world in every aspect; as Read penned in the introduction to the catalogue for the 1936 exhibition, “The philosophers, said Marx, have only interpreted the world in different ways; the point, however, is to

¹⁶ Gascoyne translated this lecture into English in 1936 (Germain, 37).

change it. The artists, too, have only interpreted the world; the point, however, is to *transform* it” (Jean, 364). But what of the means to do so? Read himself in his article on the absence of taste in the English (1935) had commented on how safe a preserve music and poetry were for the bourgeois ideas of normality, indicating that “fear of infringing the limits of normality” dissuaded “plastic expression” in the English: “Plastic expression” being “the most objective mode of expression; it involves giving fixed material expression to a personal impulse...It will be far safer to express the individual impulse in the comparatively transitory and fluid material of music and poetry” (68). Breton had already called for a move towards an emphasis on “matter over mind” in 1934 (“What is Surrealism?”, 117). This meant that plastic means were preferable in this incarnation of surrealism to the symbolic means previously employed as they answered to the call for “practical action” (Breton, 117) articulated by the historical juncture. Gascoyne had expressed a similar dissatisfaction with the early direction of the movement in 1934, with particular focus on the inadequacy of automatism, commenting, “I no longer find this navel-gazing activity at all satisfying. The surrealists themselves have a definite justification for writing in this way, but for an English poet with continually growing political convictions it must soon become impossible” (quoted in Skelton, xii). By 1936 Gascoyne had translated Breton’s sentiments into action in the form of the International Exhibition.

Yet the public had for so long identified surrealism with automatism that it would not really see the new emphasis. As the Second World War approached, this lack of vision created for surrealism a crisis of belief that was nowhere more severe than in England. (Germain, 38)

Germain offers Dali’s paranoid-critical method as the only significant example of “a solution to the formulaic monotony and the merely neurotic (‘Freudian’) contents of the images produced by automatism” (37). I would further suggest that, understood properly, it offers an insight into the material and psychological determinism of systems of representation and thereby an answer to questions of the “practical” effects of surrealism. Perhaps the only sustainable answer in the face of attacks launched at the movement by communists. One such criticism of the exhibition of 1936 published in a Marxist newspaper, *The Daily Worker*, read,

The general impression one gets is that here there is a group of young people who haven’t got the guts to tackle anything seriously and attempt to justify themselves by an elaborate rationalisation racket. (quoted in Jean, 368)

Accusations such as this were less easy to dismiss as they came from those “fellow travellers” whose company –at least in theory - the surrealists sought out. One publication in England engaged at that time in the so-called “rationalisation racket” was Roger Roughton’s *Contemporary poetry and prose*. The magazine carried translations of work by Breton and Dali, amongst others, as well as verse by Gascoyne. Naturally its contributors and content stretched further than surrealism or justifications for surrealism and Caesar reminds one that “the relationship between Surrealism, Communism, and *Contemporary poetry and prose* is complicated” (174). Be that as it may he adumbrates through the magazine and its occasional editorial comment the tenuous relationship between communism and surrealism in England at the time. He quotes from Roughton’s editorial entitled “Surrealism and Communism”,

Surrealist work, while not calling directly for revolutionary intervention, can be classed as revolutionary in so far as it can break down irrational bourgeois-taught prejudices, thus preparing the mental ground for positive revolutionary thought and action...As long as the Surrealists will help to establish a broad United Front...there is no reason why there should be any quarrel between Communism and Surrealism. (175)

Caesar suggests that such an argument “remains hopelessly glib without some discussion of how all this is to be achieved” (175), and sees such a position as an “unrefined” political stance typical of anti-Fascist artists of the 1930s. He finds in Roughton an untenable intersection of seemingly contradictory aesthetic and political discourses, “which seems to have dented Roughton’s enthusiasm, and engendered a lack of confidence in his position” (177). It appears that at last all Roughton could do was claim that surrealism was able to alert a “small section of the bourgeoisie” (176) to the revolution, a function which “in comparison with the direct impact of economic circumstances is very very minute; but the role exists and the revolutionary sincerity of its players is usually genuine” (Roughton quoted in Caesar, 176). It is reasonable to expect that a similar dilemma arising from seemingly contradictory ideologies also plagued other surrealist practitioners in England at the time.

Gascoyne recalls *Contemporary poetry and prose* with affection as that “little magazine [which] ran to 10 numbers, and may fairly be ranked as the most adventurous and consistently superior in quality of the many small literary magazines of the period” (*Collected Journals 1936-42*, 356). Gascoyne was personally close to Roughton and they had shared both an apartment and a sexual encounter in 1934. He “blames”

Roughton for originally “teasing” him into “joining the Party...regarding me as too interested in dreams and introspection to concern myself responsibly with the toiling masses” (355). Roughton, still unable to effect a synthesis that would ensure his artistic and political integrity, committed suicide in 1941 in Dublin, following a self-imposed exile from England.

The surrealist leaders had officially responded to attacks by the political left in their “International Surrealist Bulletin No. 4” following the exhibition of 1936:

The [communists] differ from us in a perfectly clear way. They refuse to accept the existence of the world of the unconscious, and their whole system is built up on the simple plan of man and the real world. It is therefore quite impossible for them to appreciate our strictly dialectical and materialist synthesis of inner and outer world as the basis of general theory. (Breton, “International Surrealist Bulletin No. 4”, 335)

This bulletin bears the signatures of the English surrealist group, including Gascoyne and Roughton. The surrealists seemed to view the movement itself in dialectical terms. They conceived of it as containing contradictions: “Surrealism contains within itself the reasons why it must be attacked”, and also of always searching for a greater synthesis, considering “as just so much material” the insufficient products of early automatism, admitting that “the problem of knowledge inevitably arose again under quite a new form” (Breton, “What is Surrealism?”, 117).

The relatively logos-oriented systematisation of paranoia brought to the movement by Dali was the strongest candidate for bridging the gap between reason and intuition, objective and subjective worlds. Paranoid-criticism constituted a step forwards in what Germain refers to as the “search for a unified expression of the continuity between events in the conscious and unconscious worlds” (38). It also offers a reply to a question which Caesar sees as going unanswered, “How can an aesthetic bent upon transcending material reality express a Marxist materialist vision, or embody a materialist critique of capitalism?” (182). Consequently it was Dali’s theory which appealed most to those English surrealists at such pains to justify their membership of a seemingly self-indulgent artistic movement in the face of escalating fascism in Europe. Dali’s critical-paranoia meant that plastic expression and symbolic tradition, seemingly so at odds in Britain, could at last be united.

Dali, “although no longer in the inner circles of Surrealism, was deemed too important to be excluded” from the International Exhibition and brought his “Aphrodisiac

Dinner Jacket” to London (Secrest, 163) along with other plastic expressions of surrealism which no doubt terrified Herbert Read’s “normal” Englishman.

Secrest relates the events of one of the lectures given by Dali, entitled “Some Authentic Paranoiac Phantoms”, during which he was “wearing a diving suit, the helmet of which was decorated with the radiator cap of a Mercedes Benz. He made his entry with two white Russian wolfhounds” (163). It was a hot day and Dali was “perspiring profusely” in the diving suit, the bolted helmet of which also prevented his audience from hearing him.

He began to make elaborate gestures for the removal of his helmet, which struck everyone as a new development deserving of applause. The more he gesticulated the more they laughed and it took some time, during which Dali thought he would faint dead away, before, as David Gascoyne explained, “we realised he was in some distress”. (164)

Gascoyne, with the aid of a spanner, came to Dali’s rescue and “he gamely finished his lecture” (Secrest, 164). The exhibition, however, was not the first time these two had met. Gascoyne was familiar with Dali’s work at least as early as his translation of Dali’s “Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment” in 1932 (Lippard, 87). He had become acquainted with the Dalis on his first visit to Paris in 1933 (Secrest, 139) at the age of seventeen. Much of the material he gathered on both this trip as well as a subsequent sojourn of 1935 was included in his *A Short Survey of Surrealism*. On the second visit “Dali asked him if he would be willing to translate into English his essay dealing specifically with his paranoid-critical method: ‘The Conquest of the Irrational’. Gascoyne agreed and was there for a week, observing their life at close quarters”. Gascoyne himself recalls “They gave me a table to work on placed at such an angle that I could see everything happening from a mirror” (Secrest, 139).

Chapter Five

I. Adolescent Heroics

David Gascoyne was born in 1916 to a “provincial” (Caesar, 178) background and middle-class parents, his father being a bank clerk, later promoted to manager. Raine adds a note of assurance in this regard, reflecting that “talent is at home anywhere” (35). He left school at the age of sixteen due to poor academic performance and at the request of the Headmaster. At this age he “had already written a volume of poems, and had begun work on a novel: his talent was nothing if not precocious” (Caesar, 180). The volume of poetry, published in 1932, was entitled *Roman Balcony*. The novel, *Opening Day*, funded, with an advance on its royalties, the young poet’s first trip to Paris in 1933. The novel itself is generally agreed to be “partly-autobiographical” (180).

In his novel *Opening Day* the sixteen-year-old author has drawn, obviously, upon his own memories; and without a trace of vanity notes the loneliness which is the inevitable lot of the young child of genius “born in exile”. (Raine, 36)

The adolescent “hero” (Caesar, 180) of the novel is pitted against a world of “adaptation, compromise, and forgetfulness” (Raine, 36). Raine terms the condition the protagonist seeks to escape, “spiritual death” and quotes Gascoyne’s novel on the fate of the misunderstood visionary: “The gradual sinking of his individuality, his thwarted talents, to the drab level of this mundane suburb that for ever sprawled beneath an ashen sky” (36). The youthful “rebellion” of the novel’s focal character indicates to Caesar Gascoyne’s repudiation of “the values of the society into which he was born, and which his parents upheld”. He argues that Gascoyne’s chosen career as poet led him to a “Bohemian existence which was in sharp contrast to the carefulness and securities of his petit-bourgeois background. In the 1930s he rejected not only his class but his country also” (180). Raine indicates that there is little evidence of Gascoyne’s background in his artistic expression: “There is nothing, in David Gascoyne’s kind and quality of imagination, which is typical of, expressive of, suburban values or modes of thought” (35). Perhaps this demonstrates his rejection of these values as Caesar maintains, rather than, as Raine would have it, his transcendence of them by virtue of his genius. Whatever the force which drove the young poet, it drove him in one direction only: “Perhaps inspired by the derivation of his surname, Gascoyne cultivated Francophilia in the 1930s” (178). Raine describes this move in characteristically poetic overtones as “the instinct of the cygnet to seek out other swans, to be with his own kind; and in a

surprisingly short time he had found his place in the literary circles of London, and soon after, Paris, where the surrealist movement was at that time the growing point of the arts” (41).

Gascoyne found the ammunition in surrealism to do battle with his background and the repressive “normalcy” of his countrymen. “The anti-social and subversive aspect of that movement commended itself to the still adolescent poet whose struggle to escape from lower middle-class suburbia had cost him dear” (Raine, 41). His two visits to Paris “gave him a knowledge of contemporary French literature greater than any of the young poets of the 1930s” (Caesar, 180). Raine remembers the young poet just prior to his departure for the continent:

Tall, possessed as he still was of the androgynous beauty of adolescence, his blue eyes expressive of great depth of feeling and imagination, his vulnerable mouth not yet brought into an expression of sorrow, he had, even then, a dignity, a presence, as if of being from another world. His voice was deep and musical, though his speech was rapid and nervous. (36)

Gascoyne incorporated his knowledge and experiences of Paris into his *A Short Survey of Surrealism* of 1935, and by 1936 had helped to found both the English Surrealist Group as well as organise the International Exhibition. This year also saw the publication of his second volume of poetry: *Man's Life Is This Meat*. By this time he was acquainted with Breton's *Second Surrealist Manifesto*, part of which he had translated in *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, and had also translated the surrealist leader's lecture “What is Surrealism?”. In both of these pieces the dedication of the surrealist movement towards social transformation, particularly in the form of Marxist principles, was becoming increasingly clear and was reflected in Gascoyne's own dissatisfaction: “I had become not so much disillusioned with Surrealism as begun to wish to explore other territories than the sub- or unconscious, the oneiric and the aleatory” (Gascoyne, *Collected Journals 1936-42*, 392). Gascoyne himself joined the Communist Party in September 1936. In the same year he also signed a declaration issued by the English Surrealist Group on the Spanish Civil war, which criticised the refusal of the British Government to supply arms to the “People's Government” in Spain and condemned growing Fascism (Jean, 372-3). Indeed, the young poet left for Spain shortly after the publication of this declaration to “work in the propaganda ministry” (Caesar, 185). As Gascoyne reflects,

In the Thirties it was still possible to believe that the surrealist movement could be seen as allied to the revolutionary aims formulated by Marx and his followers, and suppose that a revolution of consciousness must be concomitant with social and economic revolution. As a participant in the surrealist movement I felt obliged to make myself familiar with the basic principles of dialectical materialism, the philosophy still dutifully believed by countless millions throughout the world to be the necessary foundation of any practical achievement of socialist society "on earth". (*Collected Journals 1936-42*, 390)

Caesar affirms, that "Most English Surrealists in the 1930s claimed to be Communists or fellow travellers, but their theoretical position could not bear close scrutiny" (174). The apparent theoretical incompatibility of these two systems of thought led Gascoyne eventually to reject, in his poetry and thought, the dogma of both: "Gascoyne...turned away from politics to pursue his own spiritual adventure. And though he turned back from the extremes of Surrealism, his style still pursued the heights and depths of individual experience" (Caesar, 186).

Gascoyne came to cultivate mysticism, in search of a transcendent spiritual solution. Yet I think that Caesar jumps the gun in suggesting that this change was effective in the "mid-thirties" (186). This move, as Raine confirms, only occurred in the late thirties, and during 1934, 1935 and 1936 Gascoyne was still searching for a mode of expression which would unite the political and artistic discourses which warred in his conceptions. In 1934 what he rejected was not surrealism itself but automatism as a revolutionary option. This was in keeping with the call Breton had issued in the *Second Surrealist Manifesto*: "what had surely begun to dissatisfy him in surrealism was the inadequacy of a theory of inspiration which did not go beyond psychic autonomy...he thought that he was about to move in the direction of a more explicit Marxism" (Raine, 54). His theoretical journey between the Scylla of Communism and the Charybdis of Surrealism climaxed in an aborted philosophical project of 1937 in which Gascoyne attempted to define some kind of "dialectical supermaterialism" (*Collected Journals 1936-42*, 382). Unfortunately this project never came to fruition, due, Gascoyne claims, to his "complete lack of the necessary training and discipline" (382) and therefore he gives one very few clues as to the precise nature of the project other than to say that it aimed for an idea of dialectics which encompassed both the objective and subjective worlds. It will become clear however, in an examination of his work, to what extent this may have been closely related to Dali's critical-paranoia.

II. A Short Survey of Surrealism

Between its lines, Gascoyne's *A Short Survey of Surrealism* shows how the frustrated adolescent had found discourses within which to articulate his own feelings of dissent. Gascoyne begins his book by discussing the condition which he feels afflicts his fellow citizens and from which he, even in writing this survey, attempts to escape. He criticises the English for "persistently misrepresenting" surrealism, even from the first "rumours" of its arrival. He blames the "preconceptions and prejudices that help to bind together the system known (ironically, as some think) by the name of 'civilisation'" for such stubborn ignorance. He identifies the source of such preconceptions as the art and literature which "from early childhood" confine man to the "prison" of "the one and only *real* world" of convention (ix). Gascoyne echoes Breton's invocation of Rousseau in the *First Surrealist Manifesto* when he remarks that man is "bound hand and foot not only by those economic chains of whose existence he is becoming ever more and more aware, but also by chains of second-hand and second-rate ideas" (ix).

In the book he also predicts the reception the surrealist *zeitgeist* would receive from an embalmed English consciousness if it crossed the Channel. He seems painfully aware of the xenophobic insularity of his homeland and therefore presents an argument designed to placate the conservative English palate. In order to do so he must argue that the spirit of surrealism is not new to English soil or tradition.

In England...there will be many to protest that surrealism is foreign to the national temperament, that it cannot grow here as it has no roots in English tradition. Such an objection could only result from a lack of understanding of what surrealism *is*. As a matter of fact, there is a very strong surrealist element in English literature; one need only quote Shakespeare, Marlowe, Swift, Young, Coleridge, Blake, Beddoes, Lear and Carroll to prove this contention. (132)

Despite Gascoyne's claim that "surrealism transcends all nationalism" (133), a degree of xenophobic hostility did indeed greet the visitors at the International Exhibition. This is reflected in the "International Surrealist Bulletin No. 4" (July, 1936) which reacted to the varied reviews of the exhibition:

There has been a suggestion that the exhibition was governed by snob-preference for "foreigners", in whose honour it is supposed to have been arranged. This is totally untrue. We have considered only the worth and surreal effect of every exhibit and are in fact, as well as in name, completely

international. Surrealism belongs not to any nation but to humanity itself. (Breton, 336)

This seems ample proof of Read's assertions concerning the pride of the Briton in his homegrown "common sense". In *A Short Survey of Surrealism* Gascoyne had attempted to battle such bias and facilitate any future international surrealist effort. In doing so he provided the most comprehensive attempt to represent surrealism accurately to an English audience prior to the Exhibition itself. Stanford calls this "the first well-documented account of the movement just then reaching our shores" (45).

The "survey" covers the evolution of the movement from both Dada and precursors in French literature through to the *Second Surrealist Manifesto* and Breton's "What is Surrealism?". Gascoyne introduces the primary and constant aim of the surrealist movement as one of collapsing the distinction between "unreal" and "real" and posits for the surrealists the "aim to extend indefinitely the 'limits' of literature and 'art' by continually tending to do away with the barrier that separates the contents of the printed page or the picture-frame from the world of real life and action" (10). This revolution depends for Gascoyne on exposing the polyvalent nature of reality: to perceive that behind the real there already exists a "perpetual flow of irrational thought in the form of images taking place in every human mind and needing only a certain predisposition and discipline in order to be brought to light in the form of written words (or plastic images)" (11).

Gascoyne paints surrealist practice in these terms because it is specifically these aims which are not contradictory to the spirit of the *Second Surrealist Manifesto*. In emphasizing a focus on the "world of real life and action" at the heart of the movement, even in its infancy, he retrospectively and tacitly refutes the charges brought against the movement by its Marxist counterparts. In positing this as the direction of the movement from the very beginning he also manages to question the fidelity of those members of the movement who had objected to its courtship of the communists and, in doing so, labels them myopic. For Gascoyne the encounter between surrealism and Marxism was fated by the *curriculum vitae* of the movement itself.

Since the appearance of this [the Second] manifesto the development of Surrealism has been an entirely dialectical one. The principles of Marxism have given the movement a unity and a purpose that to a large extent were lacking until then. Without the philosophy of dialectical materialism behind it, surrealism could hardly have existed until to-day and be still a living force. (72)

He goes so far, in his research of 1935, to accuse those members who deserted the movement or who were publicly disowned in the *Second Surrealist Manifesto* of a “fundamental weakness of character” (58). This would be an act of self-damnation if one were to believe Casear in his assessment of Gascoyne’s own intellectual rejection of the movement as early as 1934. Indeed, even when he did effect a complete break with the movement as late as 1937, this judgement seems to have haunted him and he comes to regret his break with Breton, whom he also defends against the charge of dictatorship: “never, to my later deep regret, [did I] become reconciled with Breton...Never have I resorted, however, to describing Breton as the Pope of his sect; his authoritarian propensity was only one element of a complex character that few critics have attempted to analyse sympathetically” (*Collected Journals 1936-42*, 393).

So great were Gascoyne’s convictions in 1935, however, that he sought everywhere a coming together of surrealist and Marxist theory and practice: an attempt made, no doubt, to reconcile disparate beliefs within himself, as much as to create a synthesis between the conflicting ideologies of the two movements.

It should by now be clear to the Marxists that the surrealist attitude is totally in accord with the Communist philosophy of dialectical materialism, with its insistence on the synonymity of theory and practice, and that only the imminence of proletarian revolution allows surrealism to hope that its aims will ultimately be fulfilled. The surrealist cause is the revolutionary cause. (13)

His aim is in promoting the “new mentality” (131) afforded by surrealism, one he sees as capable of opposing the “old economic order” alongside the “old order of thought”, and refutes the communists as “silly” (119) if they prematurely dispose of such a powerful tool for social transformation. However, the importance of the material concretisation of surrealist practice to assuring a synthesis between these two “fellow-travellers” is consistently emphasised in the book. In searching out surrealist theory which supports material change and social engineering, Gascoyne goes further than Roughton in arguing that surrealism is “not a school of literature and painting...is not a system of aesthetics” (xiv), but a vital way of inducing revolution. In his search he uncovers the amulet of Dalian theory, which he maintains is essential to the survival and growth of the movement, especially after the somewhat iconoclastic *Second Surrealist Manifesto*: “The entrance of this figure [Dali] into surrealist activity was in itself enough to compensate for the loss of those with whom connections had just been severed” (91). He credits Dali with bringing to surrealism “an element until then almost unknown to it”; this is of course Dali’s “paranoiac method of criticism” (97).

He sees Dali's paranoiac method as an example of the "new, active, attitude of surrealism" and praises first and foremost its ability to objectify surrealist practice. He summarises Dali's critical paranoia as a "mental state enabling the subject, with superhuman swiftness of mind defying analysis, to draw from the objective world a concrete proof, or illustration, of his obsessions, or even of his transitory ideas" (101). Here then was an instance of a material dialectic within surrealism. Gascoyne also perceived in Dali's method the element which kept the artist from clinical madness, arguing that, even while delving into an imaginary realm, Dali "manages to exercise a kind of clinical control over his imagination, thus preventing it from dragging him with it into domains from which it would be impossible to return" (15). Paranoid-criticism is a means of diving beneath the real and tampering with its composition, suspending momentarily the dialectic which results in everyday experience of the material world. Yet it is also a way of preventing, significantly, one from becoming imprisoned in a new equally-limiting and restrictive ordering of the real. Gascoyne also defends the potentially regressive nature of the symbols Dali unearthed in reconnaissance. In response to accusations that Dali was nothing other than "'revolting,' 'pathological,' 'a muck-raker'", Gascoyne counters:

As every psychologist knows, the child loves his own excrement until he has been *taught* that it is dirty. It is only by fully understanding the arbitrary conventions, dogmas and laws that make up our civilisation that we can hope to remedy it when the future society shall have been formed¹⁷. (103)

Implicit in this response however is the confidence that Dali's method would not only enable the deconstruction of the contemporary "real", but also facilitate the reconstruction of a "future society" more in accordance with the images of desire, yet one which would also retain an element of critical control.

Thus Dali's paranoiac process in its systematic character becomes a defence for Gascoyne not only against automatism, but also against the surrealist tendency towards anarchy, an inheritance from Dada, which he saw as tantamount to the "most restricting kind of tyranny" (35).

¹⁷ It was no doubt the same concern for the British reaction to the work of the Catalan artist that led Gascoyne to remark, rather primly, of Dali's second film (which continued his preoccupations with violence and eroticism) that "It is impossible to imagine what would happen were this film to be shown in England, even to a Film Society audience" (96).

...Dali has always contended that surrealist objects “take the form of desire”. No longer does a surrealist await the message or the image to arise from the vast unconscious residue of experience; he actively imposes the image of his desires and obsessions upon the concrete, daylight world of objective reality; he actively takes part in “accidents” that reveal the true nature of the mechanism that is life far more clearly than “pure psychic automatism” could. (135)

The surrealist object was the most significant step towards a material surrealism for Gascoyne, “first announced by Salvador Dali¹⁸” (108): “The objects typify the more recent ideas of surrealism, which conceive super-reality as existing in the material world, objectively as well as subjectively in the automatic thought of the unconscious” (109). This is Dali’s royal “road to the object” (“The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment”, Lippard, 91) along which he uncovers the metaphoric structure of both the ego and its objects. It is a road which Gascoyne treads in pursuit of a material philosophy of the subjective in both his work and attempts at theory.

To what extent Gascoyne’s opinion on the potential of paranoia to furnish such a theory was directly influenced by Lacan is unclear. Let it be noted however, that in a review of surrealist literature he does comment that “*Minotaure* has also contained a number of very valuable psychoanalytic studies by Dr. Jacques Lacan” (126).

III. Bringing it home: Gascoyne’s Literary Work

Gascoyne’s work can be divided into two broad categories: pre- and post 1937. His writing of the early to mid-thirties was executed under the growing influence of surrealism, climaxing with his second volume of prose and poetry: *Man’s Life Is This Meat* (1936). This collection contains poems dedicated to individual surrealist artists, including Dali, and it is here that “the impact of Surrealism may be seen at its most intense” (Caesar, 181). His creative output after 1937, however, indicates the move towards transcendental mysticism we have spoken of.

Early poetry, such as “The Last Head”, articulates Gascoyne’s concern that the “flow of irrational thought in the form of images” (*A Short Survey of Surrealism*, xi), immanent in both human consciousness and experience, be acknowledged. That no longer should the human subject be “barred” from that realm which exists beneath a “real world” composed of restrictive convention and prejudice. Gascoyne assures his

¹⁸ This attribution seems to be incorrect. See the previous Chapter as regards the acknowledgement given, by Dali himself, to Breton’s suggestion of the surrealist object prior to his own work on the subject.

readers that, despite attempts to suppress it, the unexplored, unconscious aspect of the mind, "The Last Head",

...is safe in its vegetable dome:
The last head is wrapped in its oiled silk sheath,
While the tepid flame of its ichorous brain
Consumes all its body's dry shells.

(Gascoyne, *Collected Poems*, 8)

He offers this defence against the climate of what he describes as a "sombre country the wettest place on earth" (Gascoyne, "Cubical Domes", *Collected Poems*, 25) where the "problem of living" is paramount, always "to be considered/With its vast pink parachutes of underdone mutton". This climate of British "common sense" is, for Gascoyne, one which restrains the power of the unconscious, yet he indicates that the force of the subterranean imaginary register is still determinate and active, however displaced by contemporary expression it is. He assures us that, in spite of this alienation of desire, "hearts are on fire in the snow" (Gascoyne, "Cubical Domes", *Collected Poems*, 25).

Gascoyne's early poetry is not only representative of what he would call his "own twitch of disgust/With mankind" (Gascoyne, "To a Contemporary", *Collected Poems*, 67), but also communicates a dialectical conception of experience. Gascoyne depicts reality as that which must contain opposing forces in its attempt to condense them into unified perception. Attempts by convention to affect this unity have resulted in a fragile, unsatisfactory synthesis which relies on a false and limited consciousness. In this system desire has become bound to a signification which is incapable of answering it: Dali's "affective paternal hungers". Germain quotes Herbert Read on behalf of the London Surrealist Group:

In dialectical terms we claim that there is a continual state of opposition and interaction between the world of objective fact – the sensational and social world of active and economic existence – and the world of subjective fantasy. This opposition creates a state of disquietude, a lack of spiritual equilibrium, which it is the business of the artist to resolve. He resolves the contradictions by creating a synthesis, a work of art which combines elements from both these worlds, eliminates others, but which for the moment gives us a qualitatively new experience. (26)

It is suggested that what the artist seeks to achieve is an alternative systematisation, still exclusive, which is more in harmony with desire. Any synthesis offered through the work

of art, however, needs to be subjected to the broadest and most objective experience possible. Breton insisted in his lecture “What is Surrealism?”, that the aim of Surrealism had never been transcendental and that it had always expressed “a desire to deepen the foundations of the real” (115). It was very much in the arena of the real that he hoped to achieve the point “at which life and death, the real and imaginary, the past and the future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, are not perceived as contradictions” (129). This is the point at which all experience becomes equivalent to an original image of desire for which it is a substitute. This image has become disjointed, misdirected and misrecognised in subsequent substitution. The work of art approaches this point and provides an objective experience through which one might be able to perceive it.

One gets a sense of the constant dialectical interplay between the two realms which constitute the experience of the real in Gascoyne’s “Unspoken”. Here he indicates that language itself is evidence of this dialectic, containing that which it cannot express: “With its undertow of violence and darkness/Carrying with it forever/All those formless vessels/Abandoned palaces” (Gascoyne, *Collected Poems*, 10). The images from the *sub-linguistic* “White sanctuses of sleep” are able to manifest themselves in “Full-blossoming hysterias” if the dialectic of the symbolic is foreclosed. The presence of the imaginary is constant and sometimes appears to consciousness in the very same language which that consciousness uses to render it “mute”:

Recurrent words
 Slipping between the cracks
 With the face of memory and the sound of its voice
 More intimate than sweat at the roots of the hair
 Frozen stiff in a moment and then melted
 Swifter than air between the lips
 Swifter to vanish than enormous buildings
 Seen for a moment from the corners of the eyes

(Gascoyne, “Unspoken”, *Collected Poems*, 11)

This could be read as a very succinct description of Freudian parapraxis. Despite the apparently insubstantial nature of this imaginary realm Gascoyne goes on to insist on its very concrete nature, more tangible in fact than the world offered up to perception by symbolic means. In doing so the young poet invokes what at first appear to be two

different continents, one “enormous”, the other “unspoken”. The “enormous continent” is one with

No two roads the same
 Nor ever the same names to places
 Migrating towns and fluid boundaries
 There are no settlers here there are
 No solid stones

(Gascoyne, “Unspoken”, *Collected Poems*, 11)

This seemingly characteristic description of a dream landscape is subverted when Gascoyne introduces the “unspoken continent” where

Among the unspeaking mountains
 The dumb lakes and the deafened valleys
 Illumined by paroxysms of vision
 Clear waves of soundless sight
 Lapping out of the heart of darkness
 Flowing endless over buried speech
 Drowning the words and words

(Gascoyne, “Unspoken”, *Collected Poems*, 11)

One quickly becomes aware that Gascoyne is toying with one’s preconceptions. Initially the impulse is to differentiate the continents as conscious and unconscious. However, one is then faced with selecting which is which. The first continent seems insubstantial enough to be that of the somnambulist, but the unspoken continent is where the words associated with the conventions of consciousness become submerged by images. Now the first continent appears to be that of the accepted real, although it is rendered altogether ephemeral: its towns migrating and its boundaries fluid; names no longer serve to specify, only to obscure. The second continent is where one locates the “solid stones” of mountains, lakes and valleys, yet these are only made real due to “clear waves of soundless sight” which reveal their true nature, unobscured by arbitrary symbolic representation. Ultimately one begins to realise that the distinction itself may be false, and that these continents exit simultaneously, that Gascoyne’s “travelling” through one is also his “travelling” through the other: a form of synthesis.

Gascoyne seems to be conveying the message that the unconscious is recoverable in the material world, which speaks in its preferred language of images, while spoken language becomes a perverted conveyor of an unspoken world. This dialectic results for Gascoyne in “A dim world uttering a voiceless cry/Spinning helpless between sleep and waking” (Gascoyne, “Unspoken”, *Collected Poems*, 12). The “bodiless body” is the inhabitant of this “dim world” being at once both the physical (deprived of psychical form) and the psychical (denied access to physical form). This split and fallen “body” can only return to the “hub” from which it was “cast” when the physical and psychical are able to exist simultaneously and on equal footing in a new synthesis. In this new reality the imaginary is made flesh and the material world is revealed as a series of images. Until such a time the imaginary will always return in the tides of those “foaming oceans of disintegration/Where we navigate our daylight vessels/Following certain routes to uncertain lands” (Gascoyne, “Unspoken”, *Collected Poems*, 12).

Gascoyne aimed to unite the subjective and objective realms into a new, alternative “real”. He hoped to manifest a reality which was no longer plagued by “misdirected desire” (Caesar, 184) in the form of warfare and social oppression (paternal hungers), but acknowledged original desire and articulated it more authentically in its symbols. To do this he had to unhinge the dialectic which composes the real, reveal the subterranean sliding of images and freeze into place a new and more authentic system of signification as reality. This is at heart a paranoid process and very much like that employed by Dali in his paranoid-critical method. Germain locates in Dali’s paranoid method the aim articulated by British surrealism, in that such “Paranoia does not obliterate reality, nor surrender to subjectivism” (36). He goes further to suggest that Dali’s “double images” find a corresponding feature in British surrealist poetry:

In painting, Dali produced double-images where without physical change one object simultaneously represents another. In poetry, the technique becomes a *demonstrable* way of turning one image into another without resorting to metaphor. (Germain, 36)

This process is evident in “Unspoken” where the simultaneity of the imaginary and the symbolic is played out, for example, in the double continent. However, I would make a slight adjustment to Germain’s formulation and argue that it is a process which is indicative, not of an absence of metaphor, but of the ontological implications afforded

metaphor by Lacan. In encountering an alternative system of signification *as reality* in the poem, the reader is induced into a subjectivity where this condensation of images becomes the only comprehensible real. The arrangement of the images in the poem must be taken “literally” (Germain, 32) and not appropriated by interpretation to aid a conventional system of meaning. Metaphors are concretised into the real. Germain uses the images in Gascoyne’s “The Very Image” to demonstrate this process. He suggests that the bewildering succession of juxtaposed and contradictory images create an overwhelming “incongruity of contexts” and that this “May put the reader into the unsettling position of realising that while there is nothing ‘real’ before him (it’s just images), the images nevertheless exist. He finds them in the poem and in his mind” (33). If the “real” of the poem is consistently undermined it invites the reader to observe the sliding of images beneath the symbolic real that occurs in the dialogue between the unconscious and conscious minds.

Unconscious desire, manifesting itself in the symbolic images, fills the conscious mind with wonder, or perhaps dread. Not clinging to either, perception watches the images surfacing, aware suddenly of the primal processes evolving effortlessly beneath it. (Germain, 34)

If the poem consistently pursues a single “hallucinatory obsessive symbolism” (Skelton, ix), then it has resolved the dialectic it sought to open and so forecloses the space of imaginary interplay. In this case the poem may find itself drawn into full-fledged paranoia. Most of Gascoyne’s early poems engage in an array of paradoxical images, yet there is also a tendency, characteristic of critical paranoia, to arrange these images into some sort of structure: “in most of his poems Gascoyne...retains some vestiges of narrative to impose a pattern upon his imagery, and thus steers away from the reefs of automatism” (Caesar, 182).

Critical paranoia had provided this legitimately “irrational” and therefore surreal, nod in the direction of objectivity. Through the agency of this theory, surrealism had not only escaped the growing impotence of automatic composition but also managed to somewhat refute accusations of its own material ineffectualness. Critical paranoia gives the poet an opportunity to transform the real by engaging the power of the imaginary which underlies it, condensing the two into a range of paranoiac representations. The reader gains insight into the dialectic responsible for reality and how the poet can manipulate this.

If he is a good reader, he becomes freed from his own pre-learned, common-sense representations of the world long enough to recognise that along perceptual pathways an object can exist in many forms – he has just experienced some of these in his mind. If he is free enough, he may then see how very object of his *own* world is not what it appears, and how it is. (Germain, 37)

This then, like Benjamin's reader, is a reader of dialectical images. Gascoyne, like Benjamin, acknowledged the possible political implications of a paranoid dialectic, manifested materially in actions as much as objects. In imagery of "The Cubical Domes" and "The Rites of Hysteria", Caesar finds the hint of continuity between the state of the personality and the state of the nation: "By juxtaposing the private nightmares of the psyche with those of the public world of history, Gascoyne subtly suggests the relationship between the two" (183). In "The Cubical Domes" Gascoyne describes "factories" of convention that operate in the "kingdom" of the subjective, paralleling those that litter the wet "sombre country". These factories produce "the strongest canonical wastepaper-baskets" which aid the "archbishops dressed in their underwear" (Gascoyne, *Collected Poems*, 25) in hiding the "untold truths" to support the "decayed psychologies" stifling both the island of self and the historical British Isles. Indeed, both "kingdoms" become very little more than repositories of "second-rate ideas" (Gascoyne, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, ix). Stanford believes that "In his [Gascoyne's] verse we can read the symptoms of the individual and communal uneasiness... The Revolution, then, which Gascoyne envisaged – the only revolution truly worth the name – would be both an inner and an outer process; a social and internal liberation of man" (42-44). For Caesar "a dialectic is achieved between the internal psychic nightmare and the nightmare of political event" (183).

Neither of these critics however identifies this process as paranoid in nature. One critic who does is Kathleen Raine, although even she does not posit a direct relationship between Dali's method and Gascoyne's style. Unnecessarily, it would seem, she employs a rather tardy historical intermediary in the form of the theory of Mass Observation (founded in 1937). Aspects of this technique she identifies as "akin to (perhaps in part determined by)" (47) Dali's conception of paranoia, in that it too sought a dialectic in objects and phenomena which would reveal the systemising structure of the personality: "We create the world continually in the image of our dreams; and we see reflected in the outer, images of inner realities and preoccupations" (Raine, 48). The only

significant difference, it seems, is that in this dialectic Mass Observation sought the “subliminal stirrings of the collective mind of the nation” (47). It must, however, be kept in mind when reviewing Raine’s assessment of Mass Observation, which she calls an “original variant of the irrationalist movement” (47), that Dali, as early as “The Rotting Donkey” had suggested that certain images might very well be universal. Perhaps the real difference is that Mass Observation found its dialectic in mass-manufactured products and popular culture, such as “advertisements, popular songs, themes in the press, the objects with which people surround themselves (have on their mantelpiece, for example)¹⁹” and sought specifically the mind of a single *nation*.

Raine is unaware that before the appearance of Mass Observation, a foreigner had made a sarcastic suggestion that the appropriate place to seek out a plastic expression of the British “mind” would be in popular mass-produced forms. Writing in 1934 Read comments that,

A year or two ago a Danish architect made an exhibition of the real, the unrecognised, English arts. The chef d’oeuvre was the English football; there were English boots and English tennis-rackets; suitcases and saddles, and probably a water-closet. (*Le Minotaure*, 68)

It is somewhat ironic that Mass Observation should give added impetus to the suggestion by Read that the English mind suffers under the tyranny of common sense. Whatever the outcome of this somewhat flippant suggestion, however, it seems more likely that Gascoyne would have encountered Dali’s paranoiac method prior to any acquaintance with Mass Observation. He had translated Dali’s “Object Revealed in Surrealist Experiment” as early as 1932 and in the same issue of the magazine - *This Quarter* - that included a translation of “The Rotting Donkey” (Lippard, 97). Furthermore Gascoyne gives no intimation of even the possibility of Mass Observation in his *A Short Survey of Surrealism*. It should also be remembered that Dali himself extended the scope of his method in the sociological and political arenas, attributing the rise of fascism to a disjuncture of the subjective mechanisms of the personality. Although she uses the stepping stone of Mass Observation, Raine does at least document the effect of Dali’s

¹⁹ The similarity between Mass Observation and Benjamin’s “semiotics” is quite startling, especially if one considers Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*. This project strove to find in these commercial shopping centres, then flourishing in Paris and exemplary of the fashions of the age, clues to a universal unconscious. Once revealed such insights, “profane illuminations”, would allow Benjamin to become “an interpreter of dreams of the...world of things” (Tiedemann, 934).

And the children, lost in the shadows of the catacombs,
 Call to the mirrors for help:
 “strong-bow of salt, cutlass of memory,
 Write on my map the name of every river.”

(Gascoyne, “Salvador Dali”, *Collected Poems*, 21)

Dali’s paintings become for Gascoyne mirrors to the imaginary and this poem takes on an added resonance if one recalls that Gascoyne observed Dali’s artistic process via a mirror in his Paris apartment, positioned for this very purpose. One of the “mirrors” in the poem, in addition to signifying the chronicle of the imaginary which is Dali’s paintings, is perhaps also the mirror through which Gascoyne recorded Dali’s machinations. This is plausibly the case in “my body growing from his head”, and in the last stanza where “Mirrors write Goliath’s name upon my forehead” (22), these images acting simultaneously as a possible reference to an artistic ascendancy as well as a factual documentary. If this is the case and the mirror in the poem is a form of double image which encompasses not only deep insight but is also “merely” a documentation of physical perspective, then it may prove a homage to Dali’s own so-called “documentaries” and his paranoiac method as a whole. It is also reminiscent of the *First Surrealist Manifesto* where Breton’s alternative signification of a man looking out of a window leads him to consider that his description is in some ways more authentically objective by encapsulating the subjective.

Further evidence that Gascoyne conducted similarly objective “research” into the subjective is to be found in a prose poem included in his *Collected Poems 1932-1936*. It is entitled “Phenomena”, and, in keeping with Dali’s documentaries which evoked the objective and subjective simultaneously, it condenses perceptions - external and internal – in order to record accurately the “phenomena” of this world. Owing to its investigative capacity, perhaps it is no coincidence that it sounds like the monologue of a film noir detective, in this case a keen observer of both the outer and inner world:

It was during a heat-wave. Someone whose dress seemed to have forgotten who was wearing it appeared to me at the end of a pause in the conversation. She was so adorable that I had to forbid her to pass across my footstool again...The milk had turned sour in its effort to avoid the centrifugal attraction of a blemish on its own skin. Everything was mounting to the surface. My last hope was to diminish the barometric pressure at least enough to enable me to get out from beneath it alive. (Gascoyne, “Phenomena”, *Collected Poems*, 27)

Raine attempts to attribute Gascoyne's "scientific images" (61) here to the influence of Mass Observation, which, although possible, is unlikely, as the poem was almost certainly composed two years before the founding of that movement. A far more suitable precedent is to be found in Dali's "documentaries" from 1929.

Gascoyne's own sojourn into the catacombs of the unconscious was originally intended not only to subvert conventional reality, but also to indicate how that reality had misrecognised desire and consequently misappropriated it into the fragmentation and decay he saw blossoming about him. This form of deconstruction was the revolution which the anti-bourgeois poet pursued in his early career. In his poetry this resulted in what Caesar refers to as "a turgid stream of imagery" (182), where images, which condensed unconscious and conscious perceptions, material (even commercial) and psychical, were successively established and undermined:

when an angel writes the word TOBACCO across the sky
 the sea becomes covered with patches of dandruff
 the trunks of trees burst open to release streams of milk
 little girls stick photographs of genitals to the windows of their
 homes
 prayerbooks open themselves to the death service
 and virgins cover their parent's beds with tealeaves

(Gascoyne, "And the Seventh Dream is the Dream of Isis", *Surrealist Poetry in English*, 106)

Such subversion of the "real" was intended to invoke "unforeseen happenings" which were signs that a shift in foundations was about to take place for "the time of earthquakes is at hand" (106). Such a suggestion is somewhat more dramatic than "stink-bombs to embarrass the middle-class mind" (45) which is what Stanford finds in these lines. Yet it is true that revolution started for Gascoyne by means of an inversion of the world composed by largely bourgeois convention.

In 1937, however, he began to aim at resolving the conflict between the subjective and objective states of being in a newly conceived synthesis, a "future society" which would allow for harmonious interaction between the two, "his surrealist technique... is used to a definite unitive end" (Stanford, 47). His former indulgences became the "unseeing trek through...cruel/Subjective labyrinths" (Gascoyne, "To a Contemporary", *Collected Poems*, 67). His praise of Dali's "quite deliberate invocation of

the Void” becomes a criticism of what he begins to see as a “refuge” in “unbelief”, the “seeming truth” (67). This quest is replaced for Gascoyne with a belief that poetry bears within it a prophetic and messianic power: “The fragmented psyche has now given place to a vision of an imaginative wholeness towards which the poet had long been feeling his way” (Raine, 55).

This statement seems, in almost Lacanian terms, to diagnose Gascoyne as having developed full-blown paranoia: to have been completely at the mercy of the imaginary. Caesar sees Gascoyne becoming increasingly obsessed with his own oracular power and records that in his Journals of 1939 Gascoyne writes of “being called” to join a “spiritual aristocracy”, “bent upon persuading himself of his prophetic role” (Caesar, 186). After a protracted use of paranoid-criticism we find him, as with Dali, in touch with some form of “cosmic soul”. In his poetry we find Gascoyne calling on the “Christ of Revolution and Poetry” to “Redeem our sterile misery” so that “man’s long journey through the night/May not have been in vain” (Gascoyne, “Ecce Homo”, *Collected Poems*, 46). Gascoyne’s worldview comes to somewhat resemble Benjamin’s and, in its religious overtones, even Schreber’s. In this world a particular use and understanding of language will ensure a glimpse of “the meaning of the whole” (Stanford, 64) and “announce the true underlying event taking place” (Caesar, 186). One can best get an idea of Gascoyne’s resultant cosmology from the series of poems he introduces as religious in the introduction of the collection entitled *Poems 1937-42*.

These poems posit a divine universal presence attendant in moments of lucid subjectivity. This subjectivity, however, does not draw one deeper into the self but returns the world to an authentic objectivity, where its physical appearance and objects become the imagery of a universal soul - split by human folly - in communication with itself. Much of this conception springs from surrealist influence:

For if from the surrealists Mr. Gascoyne learned to find everywhere mirrored in objective reality, subjective states, it was not only or principally his own subjectivity he so discovered; the rebel against the world of the common man returned to articulate that world’s unspoken dreams²⁰. (Raine, 48)

Yet Gascoyne replaced the surrealist unconscious with a quasi-religious signifier of unity. The “Presence”, which Gascoyne envisioned, has been displaced and

²⁰ Once again Raine does not care to add the addendum that such a universal and communicable transformational power was also to be learned from the surrealist texts, specifically those of Dali, in which Gascoyne found his teachers.

its pure form exiled from the reality that humankind composes by convention and the false sense of the objective which it affords. In this reality the “Word [is] made flesh/Made ransom...Till the catharsis of the race shall be complete” (Gascoyne, “Pieta”, *Collected Poems*, 40). In this way the god of the imagination has come to be perverted, misrepresented and misrecognised: “continually betrayed yet ever-present in and to mankind, to the end of the world. He [Gascoyne] has given expression to that world-long crucifixion to which the ‘god within’ has at all times been subjected” (Raine, 58). How then is such a “god” to be recognised? This is especially problematic, as Stanford reminds one, since “We arrive on the scene at the end of the drama: virtue has been crucified, and humanity enters a period of negation” (50). One is only able to find this Presence again by tracing the marks and symbols of its negation, its “stigmata” which are also “our cruellest wounds” (Gascoyne, “Lachrymae”, *Collected Poems*, 43). It is in our own suffering then that this Presence will reveal itself. What is required of us then is that we “endure” long enough to capture a transient illumination: “a momentary glimpsed/Escape into the golden dance of dust/Beyond the window” (Gascoyne, “Sanctus”, *Collected Poems*, 44). Such a moment of illumination is reminiscent of Benjamin’s “profane illumination”, which also sought revolution through the manifestation of an original vocabulary of images in the real. Gascoyne also shares Benjamin’s belief that the only traces of salvation remain the debased signifiers of the “conscious” world, which also recall, in their negation, the images they alienate. This illumination is akin to an unconscious bubbling beneath the veneer of existence, but now any unconscious has taken on cultural and spiritual dimensions, “the ‘mental substratum’ has revealed itself...as the ‘person’ of God” (Raine, 59). The world remains the product of a flawed and inauthentic dialectic, however, Gascoyne looks forward to a final synthesis in which conscious and unconscious signifiers will be fused into a new reality.

Illumination is only assured, however, if one “endures” a journey to the very edge of the Void. The Void is the result of the negation of the divine Presence. It is in the face of this Void that humankind will create its conventions of self and society, aware however, that such fictions can be destroyed in a heartbeat. It is an ultimate truth which is outlined by the pain, sacrifice and rejection which were precipitated by the negation of divine Presence. Or perhaps, like Lacan’s Other, it is not so much truth as that which the conscious “lie invokes as a guarantor of the truth in which it subsists” (Lacan, “Insistence of the letter in the unconscious”, 172). Nevertheless, for Gascoyne, the “cruellest wounds” are the forms and signs of the perversion of the divine Presence which

humankind finds the least easy to manipulate. Consequently it is these that are the most effective at communicating its existence in a fallen world: "Truth, one might say, involves the unorthodox; since mankind, as a whole, resides in the lie" (Stanford, 62).

As with untold intensity
 On the far edge of Being, where
 Life's last faint forms begin to lose
 Name and identity and fade
 Away into the Void, endures
 The final triumphant flame
 Of all that's most despoiled and bare

(Gascoyne, "The Gravel-Pit Field", *Collected Poems*, 91)

It is here that the poet-prophet, according to Gascoyne, must lay his or her course,

Because the depths
 Are clear with only death's
 Marsh-light, because the rock of grief
 Is clearly too extreme for us to breach

(Gascoyne, "De Profundis", *Collected Poems*, 41)

At such proximity to the Void all "man-measured value" (Gascoyne, "Gravel Pit Field", *Collected Poems*, 92) disappears and an "apotheosis" is effected as the imagination takes hold of the real. In many ways "Gravel Pit Field" traces the paranoiac-critical procedure, "critical" until the point where Gascoyne believes that he finds a moment of true synthesis. The poem begins with his reflections on a field, where snails and other objects become double images straddling two states of existence: the snail shells become "rare stones" in a necklace worn by the dead queen of "a great Pharaoh",

And who in solitude like this
 Can say the unclean mongrel's bones
 Which stick out, splintered through the loose
 Side of a gravel pit, are not
 The precious relics of some saint,
 Perhaps miraculous?

(Gascoyne, "Gravel Pit Field", *Collected Poems*, 92)

The succession of potential images are replaced finally by the "apotheosis" of the field itself, which renders it a "tabernacle" enabling a communion of spirit "Between this world and the beyond", "Remote from men and yet more real/Than any human dwelling place"

(Gascoyne, "Gravel Pit Field", *Collected Poems*, 93). Yet one is reminded again that the way to such moments of illumination is hard,

...But to understand
 Is to endure, withstand the withering blight
 Of winter night's long desperation, war,
 Confusion, till the dense core
 Of this existence all the spirit's force
 Becomes acceptance of blind eyes
 To see no more. Then they may see at last;
 And all they see their vision sanctifies.

(Gascoyne, "Sanctus", *Collected Poems*, 44)

True sight is that which will recompose the world with the power of the imagination. The world is constructed in the dialectic of perception and Gascoyne's revolution depends on alternative perception, one that unites the subjective and objective states in a more authentic synthesis. A new mode of being is created in the new way of seeing and vice versa; they are, to use Dali's term, "consubstantial".

In other words, the poetic process assembles the contents and relations of the mind in a new creative order; replacing the physical body of matter with the image of matter – its imaginative twin. This method by which phenomena is apprehended and made one's own – while the intellect is withdrawn or withheld – corresponds to the mystic process, by means of which the spirit intuits presences beyond the perception of reason. (Stanford, 55)

Stanford seems completely unaware that this is also a fair description of Dali's paranoid-critical method. His conservatism also denies him the possibility of indicating that the intention behind such a process is also to alter the physical real. Nor does he seem capable of acknowledging that this process necessarily involves the intellect and does not demand that it be "withdrawn" as he suggests. One must recall that it was precisely against such automatism that Gascoyne rallied. His description omits the systematisation implicit in Gascoyne's method and evident in his intricate elaboration of the dialectic structure of reality. Such intellectual systematisation is certainly part of Gascoyne's cosmology, and it is that which he attempts to communicate as a mode of knowledge, couched in his paranoiac signifiers, of course.

The "endurance" asked of those who wish to glimpse the imaginary is particularly required of the artist or poet. He or she must act as seer amidst the

defilement resulting from a poorly wrought dialectic between an imaginary realm and its symbolic counterpart, the real as we misperceive it. It is oftentimes those closest to the Void invoked by false consciousness, those who “endure” the most, that perceive the “golden dust” of a greater truth: “the rejected and the condemned become/Agents of the divine” (Gascoyne, “Ecce Homo”, *Collected Poems*, 46). Indeed, it seems the poet must position himself closest to the Void, erasing all comfortable truths, “The black priest and the upright man/Faced by subversive truth shall be struck dumb,/Christ of Revolution and Poetry” (Gascoyne, “Ecce Homo”, *Collected Poems*, 46).

The poet of the imaginary is also betrayed by his very means of expression: language and its conventions. It is his role to attempt a new dialectic of signification, an effort to trace the Presence with the very terms which have brought about its negation and therein he tempts the Void. This is why the “black priest” is “struck dumb” at the moment of revelation. It is a “raid on the inarticulate” (Eliot, 203) which Gascoyne finds overwhelming and fixed to a “bleak page” “by the nib/Of an inept pen” (Gascoyne, “Apologia”, *Collected Poems*, 65), he asks,

Before I fall
Down silent finally, I want to make
One last attempt at utterance, and tell
How my absurd desire was to compose
A single poem with my mental eyes
Wide open, and without even one lapse
From that most scrupulous Truth which I pursue
When not pursuing Poetry. – Perhaps
Only the poem I can never write is *true*.

(Gascoyne, “Apologia”, *Collected Poems*, 66)

Gascoyne now becomes like the Goliath figure which he perceived in Dali, adopting “the pose/Of a demented wrestler” in this eternal match against an “unseen opponent” (Gascoyne, “Apologia”, *Collected Poems*, 66) who is at once both mightier and less substantial than oneself. Yet the desire to unite imagination, perception, experience and expression sustains the poet, even though he or she, like us, is often struck deaf, blind and mute to such truth in this defiled and defiling world.

We cannot hear or see, nor say
The name: There is no light
Or shade, nor place nor time,
No movement, no repose,

But only perfect prescience
Of the Becoming of the Whole

(Gascoyne, "Requiem", *Collected Poems*, 95)

Gascoyne like Lacan and Dali speaks of an "immanent structure of the human world" (Bowie, 40) and like theirs, this structure involves a conflict between the imaginary and its representation in the real. For Gascoyne and the ageing Dali at least, this conflict becomes one which must be subsumed by a greater unity which predates such disjunction. This becomes some sort of divine salvation where imaginary signifiers are rendered real. This real then becomes contiguous with our being which is also a product of these imaginary signifiers and the system they induce. The objective self and its world is brought into alignment with the subjective self and its world, creating unity and harmony: a metaphor is stabilised to the extent that it is no longer discernible as such but is now inseparable from the experience of the real. Like vertebrae, the imagination, the self and the real (or symbolic), once aligned are supposed to allow for some sort of uninterrupted flow of energy from a form of godhead, letting the artist tap into the universal body.

[Voice]

The seed springs from us into flower; yet none can tell
At what hour late or early those concealed furled leaves
And multifoliate petals shall outgrow their tender shell.

[Choir]

The hour is unknown:
The Hour endures:
The hour strikes every hour.

(Gascoyne, "Requiem", *Collected Poems*, 96)

If Dali became transfixed by the illusion of unity which is the province of the imaginary, then so too did Gascoyne. It would seem that in Gascoyne's case, his conviction in a transformational revolution in the real necessitated that he settle upon some form of defining signification for the structure which he perceived operating in both the world and the self. A form of paranoid-criticism undoubtedly afforded him this perception.

Gascoyne's signification of this system displays many characteristics typical of the Lacanian paranoiac. Narcissism is implicit in the idea that the poet, owing to his

insight has been selected as a prophet by a divine Presence. This Presence makes itself known firstly through persecution and the poet must seek to sacrifice his individuality to reunite with this archetypal unity. This entity also communicates almost solely with the poet and does so in terms which shape the real. The imaginary systematisation, once uncovered, has become fused with a non-ironic, quasi-religious signification. The story that Gascoyne tells could well function as a description of the imaginary: the tale of the entry of the Lacanian subject into the world, complete with the oscillation between narcissistic pleasure and identification with an ambivalent ideal.

Whatever his clinical status, Gascoyne as a practitioner of paranoid-criticism created a poetic topography where he condensed the unconscious with the political, social and inane. This illustrates the range of signification opened up to him by his singular life: “no poet has so fully exposed himself to, or so fully absorbed, all the important currents of the thought of his time, whether in the arts, in politics, or in philosophy” (Raine, 64).

Conclusion

In his article on Dali, George Orwell, despite decrying the artist's choice of lifestyle and subject matter, adds: "He is an exhibitionist and a careerist, but he is not a fraud. He has fifty times more talent than most of the people who would denounce his morals and jeer at his paintings" (229). It is certainly with a degree of scepticism that any intending investigator approaches the discourse of Dali, especially as it locates itself, for the most part, between fantasy and parody. What has become increasingly evident through the course of my research, however, is that Dali's acute intelligence has been underrated and that there is even reason to place him among the most insightful and influential interpreters of Freud. His paranoid-criticism, even before Lacan adopted and expanded many of its principles, offers nothing less than a theory of phenomenological ontology rooted in a psychoanalytic-inspired understanding of semiotics.

As we have observed, in Dali's paranoid-criticism there is the suggestion that our perceptual and interpretative consciousness is born alongside the objects which we perceive as reality. Indeed they are both a product of the same system of signification which is dialectical in nature and very much "material" in that it furnishes the base on which the superstructure of our experience of the real rests. This is the point at which Lacan reminds us that Stalin was forced to conclude that language is not a superstructure (Lacan, "Agency of the letter in the unconscious", 176).

Despite this, it remains easier to understand Dali through Lacan because the latter maintains the psychoanalytic metaphor in his exposition of the paranoiac impulse. Lacan does acknowledge in the process of doing so, however, that this metaphor is itself paranoiac, in seeking to fix a single signification to the imaginary. Dali, as much as he employs the psychoanalytic metaphor, is quick to underscore it with a seemingly more personal repertoire of representation. He does so in order not to become caught in the allure of a single mode of representation which would cause reality to crystallise permanently in a single paranoiac construction. Consequently, Dali gives up the appearance of objective "scientific" meaning. At first he replaces the fixation offered by psychoanalysis with his own shifting significations. Later, however, he becomes obsessed with increasingly mystical reflections. He appears also to become less critical and ultimately, as we have seen, is transfixed by the ideal of unity whispered by the imaginary. Lacan, despite engaging a sustained metaphor, appears to preserve the "controlled skid" (Roustang, 118) demanded by critical paranoia. We have seen how

Lacan manages this in his lectures in always resisting the closure of meaning and thereby never permitting the stitching up of the dialectic. This is the element which one can appreciate in most of Dali's early work, especially in his attempts at "double images", but also significantly in his poetry. In effect critical paranoia implies showing the imaginary in the midst of resolving itself into a new symbolic presence; yet to do so in terms which resist similar stultification. This process is less of a "striptease" than catching reality with its "pants down", so to speak.

As Dali discovered, however, if one practices critical paranoia enough, one gets a sense of the ideal which, as Lacan and Gascoyne remind one, tempts us to oblivion. This is the oblivion of that state to which Benjamin envisions a return: a time in which there was the word which, in creating both consciousness and its world, bound the objective and subjective together. Gascoyne attempted to provide for a similar state of being in his "dialectical supermaterialism" (*Collected Journals 1936-42*, 382). For Lacan this is the time at which our being was equal to the signifier of desire. In the "fallen" world we long to, as Dali identifies, unite with those objects which our desire has brought into existence, yet these are also those objects which are responsible for alienating our desire.

Gascoyne correctly identifies that a void marks out the presence of the divine. To capture the ideal for Gascoyne, as for Schreber, means the eradication of self. The "self" being that illusion, which was brought about by the splitting of signifier and signified, summoned to mediate between the symbolic and the imaginary through perceptual consciousness. This consciousness is also, however, always to be duped in the equation, because as Lacan reminds us, the symbolic and imaginary are not on the same level: "and man deludes himself when he believes his true place is at their axis" (Lacan, "Agency of the letter in the unconscious", 166). We are fools because we identify the objects of this world as our desire. This is also the lie which invokes the guarantor whose voice is the unconscious.

Paranoiac desire then, ultimately, is the desire for obliteration, a desire allowed for by Freud in the death drive: "a function [that] would be concerned with the most universal endeavour of all living substance – namely a return to the quiescence of the inorganic world" ("Beyond the Pleasure Principle", 336). Freud even goes so far as to suggest an original state in which we were one with our objects of desire. He quotes Plato's *Symposium* on the origins of the sexes and comments: "Shall we follow this hint given to us by the poet-philosopher, and venture upon the hypothesis that living

substance at the time of its coming to life was torn apart into small particles, which have ever since endeavoured to reunite through the sexual instincts?" (332). The ultimate aim of desire then would be the end to desire, a return, as Freud puts it, to "an earlier state of things" (336). In such a case paranoia is a more authentic representation of desire in that it attempts to arrest the inevitable continuation of desire which occurs with the endless sliding of signification.

The experience of paranoia, if successively maintained in a "controlled skid" will allow for a critical faculty which can re-orient reality. Hilary Clark points out that Dali suggests in his work that "all interpretation is to some degree a 'critical paranoia'" (Clark, 3). This means that interpretation is a way to work open the dialectic of representation and reset signification to approximate to subjective interests in the vocabulary of desire. Clark suggests that reading then becomes a paranoiac reaction in which we hijack signifiers from the "Master's text" (Clark, 3) through the implementation of our own metaphor. This may indeed be the case, yet what of a text like Lacan's which actively seeks to resist closure? Is it more likely to tempt one to a paranoiac reaction? Perhaps it is no less likely to do so than any authoritarian text we may interpret; however, the works of Dali, Lacan and to some extent, Gascoyne, do not allow us to do so comfortably. One has the same reaction in reading Dali or Gascoyne as that which Clark finds when one engages with Lacan:

we as readers cannot return to Lacan without encountering our own desires and delusions, along with Lacan's, as we read. As the Chesire Cat says to Alice in Wonderland, Lacan says to us: "We're all mad here". (Clark, 34)

This thesis has been to some extent not only an attempt to follow the "mimetic" sliding of the critical-paranoid texts under examination, but also a charting of the development of an interpretative metaphor. This research has been the uncovering of a chain of signification which is suspended vertically above paranoia and reaches into the cultural unconscious. It may be, as Lacan suggests, that even culture mimics in its functioning that original signifying structure encountered in the imaginary. Yet our very faculty of perception is a product of this imaginary structure and so it seems that we cannot but perpetrate paranoia in finding it everywhere. Perhaps the best one can do then is use the awareness of this structure not to become fixated in any one attempt to signify it.

Ultimately it is with an awareness that that which I have interpreted resists conclusion that I must conclude.

Appendix

Freud came to examine the memoirs of Dr. Daniel Schreber in the summer of 1910. These memoirs, published in 1903, presented Freud with the opportunity to examine a “delusional system” (Freud, “Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia”, 139). Freud identified the two principal elements of Schreber’s delusion: “his transformation into a woman and his favoured relation to God” (167).

Schreber’s illness followed, significantly for Freud, a thought which he had had months before: “that after all it must be very nice to be a woman submitting to the act of copulation” (142).

During his illness, Dr. Schreber, having experienced a “re-birth” after apparent death, in which “he...would sit perfectly rigid and motionless for hours (hallucinatory stupor)” (143), re-emerged in the belief that he was of special interest to an absent creator. This God had originally created the world by inhabiting it in essence, so that everything was composed of the “nerves of God”.

In their creative capacity – that is, their power of turning themselves into every imaginable object in the created world – they [the nerves of God] are known as *rays*. (153)

God, however, had now retreated to “an immense distance” (153) and become hostile to the affairs of men. These men, themselves, were to Schreber “curiously improvised” (208). Uniquely, Schreber’s own relation to God was ambivalent. Schreber, in conditions of “intense excitement” (156), presented a threat to the existence of the God by drawing his “rays” into him.

Schreber regarded the doctor who had treated him previously, and who once again became his physician, as his greatest persecutor. Before the onset of his delusion Schreber had publicly admired this man who was to become his torturer.

It fell to Schreber to re-populate the world and restore it to its previous state of union with God. He was to do so by being transformed into a woman and submitting to intercourse with God. Freud quotes Schreber:

I became clearly aware that the Order of Things imperatively demanded my emasculation, whether I personally liked it or no, and that no reasonable course lay open to me but to reconcile myself to the thought of being transformed into a woman. The further consequence of my emasculation could, of course, only be my impregnation by divine rays to the end that a new race of men might be created. (151)

Hence castration became a means through which to re-invent the world.

Through an examination of the case, Freud came to view paranoia as a regressive return to primal identifications, such as that with the ego-ideal: “Delusions of being watched present this power (ego ideal) in a regressive form, thus revealing its genesis and the reason why the patient is in revolt against it” (Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction”, 90). The paranoiac for Freud revolts against this power because its genesis is a homo-erotic identification (in the sense of the same sex). The ego-ideal “heightens the demands of the ego and is the most powerful factor favouring repression” (89), resulting, in cultural terms, in the censor of conscience.

Paranoia for Freud then becomes a mechanism by which the subject regresses to same-sex object-choice, which has proceeded from a primary narcissism. If accompanied by repression this regression will result in paranoiac forms of knowledge in which internal perceptions will be translated (displaced) into external perceptions: “And thus the impelling unconscious feeling makes its appearance as though it were the consequence of an external perception” (Freud, “Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical account of a Case of Paranoia”, 201).

Let us use the example of Schreber to indicate how, for Lacan, in the space in which the world of desired objects was to open up, another reality occurred altogether. Here we see how the process of signification, in which the child would be able to displace desire onto objects as signifiers, is “foreclosed”; literally “shut-out” into the real.

Schreber returned in his reality to the order of imaginary signifiers. He narcissistically and transexually identified with the image of his mother. The ego-ideal was re-initiated in a series of persecutors – both attractive and threatening, including the absent creator, whose language governed Schreber’s behaviour, seeming to have the material effect of His rays. God disapproved of Schreber’s narcissistic pleasures and demanded he give them up. If he persisted in this pleasure the existence of God was threatened. This in effect was a representation of the paternal metaphor being threatened with “foreclosure”.

Schreber was aware that castration, although perpetually deferred, was the only hope of returning substance to the world and thereby returning to a state of grace with God. The subject realises that castration (now a real threat) is the only possible way to fuse with *God-the-Father*. In undergoing this sacrifice Schreber could create a world of men and women who are not “flung together” because, in moving beyond the paranoiac realm which predates the phallic signification, he would be able to bring meaningful sexual division to the world.

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