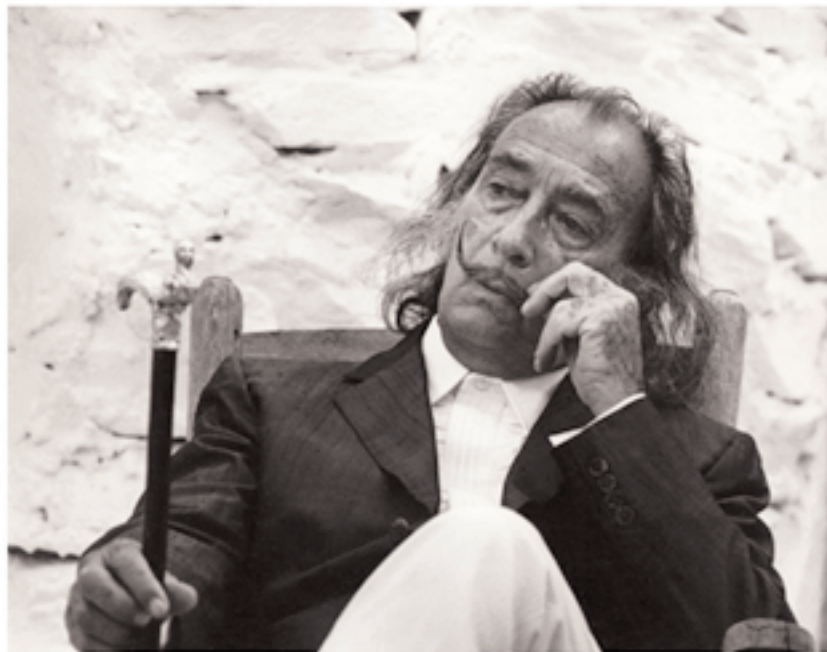
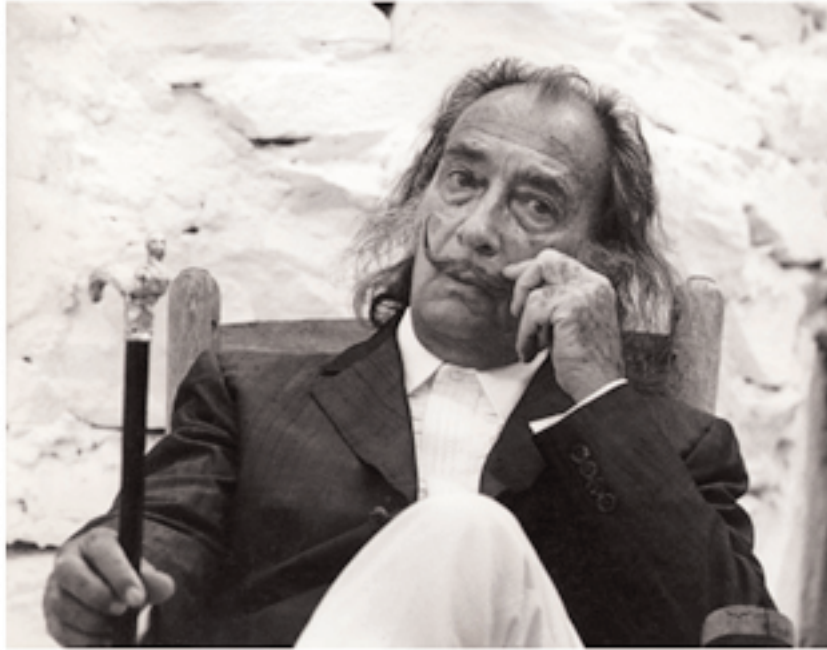


# CONVERSATIONS



WITH DALÍ

*Conversations with Dali*  
Alain Bosquet

2003 **ubu**classics

“Conversations with Dali” appeared in 1969, originally published by E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York City

**ubu**classics

[ubu.com](http://ubu.com)

Series Editor: Kenneth Goldsmith

# CONVERSATIONS WITH DALI

ALAIN BOSQUET

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY  
JOACHIM NEUGROSCHER

**ubu**classics

2003

FIRST CONVERSATION	5
SECOND CONVERSATION	10
THIRD CONVERSATION	15
FOURTH CONVERSATION	23
FIFTH, SIXTH, AND SEVENTH CONVERSATIONS	29
EIGHTH CONVERSATION	45
NINTH CONVERSATION	51
TENTH CONVERSATION	54
Salvador Dali: THE CONQUEST OF THE IRRATIONAL	57

## FIRST CONVERSATION

**A** luxury apartment in the Hotel Meurice on Rue de Rivoli above the Tuileries. Salvador Dali, wearing a navy-blue suit with broad stripes, his moustache glossy, with neither part longer than an inch and a half. The furniture is of the neutral and comfortable sort found in sumptuous international hotels. A copper mask on the mantel bears the profiles of the last sovereigns of Spain: Alphonse XIII appears amazingly young; below the effigies, the dates of their visits in the hotel. Elsewhere, the skeleton of a spoonbill together with a realistic drawing of Dali's near a mirror. The skeleton of a rattlesnake on the other side of the same mirror. Scattered about on the furniture are pieces of plastic material reflecting the superimposed shapes obtained by electronic machines, forms producing unusual optical illusions: thus, one has the impression of standing before a very deep mirror with faraway circles and oval forms. Further along, there are egg-like shapes which are projected in front, and at first sight, seem to be almost in the center of the room, whereas in both cases we actually have surface planes. Dali is signing engravings handed to him by Peter Moore, a young man, thirtyish, whose exact title is *Attaché Militaire*. From time to time a charming and formidable ocelot wearing a muzzle comes strolling in from the next room, making the intruders tremble. One enters Dali's home as one engages a windmill in Cervantes. Before the interview, Dali prefers to have a few semi-public conversations, hoping that the hubbub will provide him with material for *verbal explosions*. He adds that he is expecting "atomic scientists, physicists, ballerinas, and, some high-quality bores."

ALAIN BOSQUET: Dali, we've known each other for twenty-three years.

You're a holy terror, a *monstre sacré*<sup>1</sup>. You're probably a monster. And yet you call yourself "the divine Dali."

SALVADOR DALI: I was dubbed that by one of the greatest writers in modern Spain. He said that Dali would have to be compared to Raymond Lull,<sup>2</sup> and he added that I was the incarnation of Lull. Now Lull was known as Doctor Illuminatus and as the *archangelical scholar*. But since the latter epithet is too complicated, they finally settled on calling me *le Divin*.

A. B.: Who did?

S. D.: The Daliists.

A. B.: Who are they?

S. D.: The people who latch on to me, ostensibly because I can get them married to princes, or star them in a movie, or simply have my picture taken with them. They're climbers; what the French call *arrivistes*.

A. B.: *Arrivistes* who exploit your divinity? How can you consent so readily to other people's granting you this would-be divinity?

S. D.: I am a supreme swine. The symbol of perfection is a pig. Charles V himself adopted it to replace all other symbols of perfection. The pig makes his way with Jesuit cunning, but he never balks in the middle of the trap in our era. I feed my crap to the Daliists. Everybody's satisfied. And everything's just hunky-dory. Actually, those climbers are the finest imaginable.

<sup>1</sup> *Monstre sacré*, taken from the title of a play of Cocteau's, is applied to any great actor.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond Lull or Lully (Spanish: Ramon Llull, c. 1234-1316), Catalan author and lay missionary, was the first great mystic of the Iberian peninsula. Revered by Franciscans as *Doctor Illuminatus*.

- A. B.: You're willing to be an *arriviste* yourself, aren't you?
- S. D.: An *arriviste* with a vengeance.
- A. B.: What about your parasites?
- S. D.: I'm horribly stingy, and I get more out of them than they get out of me. They give and they give. And I profit immensely. So that the satisfaction is mutual.
- A. B.: Let me be brutally honest with you, Salvador, and tell you what you represent to certain intellectuals in my generation. For us, you're the man who invented *critical paranoia* at a time when Surrealism was skidding toward academicism. You invented the metamorphosis: the erotic metamorphosis of an object gradually changing into another object and of a person turning into another person.
- S. D.: Go on.
- A. B.: And then came Dali's fall (as far as we were concerned). During the war, for example, you were accused of having Francoist leanings. I think it's essential that I tell you. Later on, right after the war, you had a huge number of enemies in Paris. Today, we are witnessing a return to most of the Surrealists, especially Tanguy and yourself. Youth is shifting from gestural painting toward a new order. Young people of twenty or twenty-two are going back to you with friendlier feelings—and sometimes in terror as well.
- S. D.: You're right; but in the most recent outbreaks of the avant-garde, painters have come close to me ideologically, whereas Paul Cézanne's mountains and apples no longer interest them. Even during the Surrealist era, I felt that *the* great painter was Meissonier and not Cézanne .... I've always been impressed by what Auguste Comte wrote when he founded his positivist religion. He felt that we cannot build the world without bankers. I myself decided that for my personal and absolute power, the essential thing was to have lots of money. And I hold on to this money because I shall probably have to spend it to make the swine that I am hibernate. I am a swine par excellence: General Franco bestowed on me the highest honor that can be given to a living artist: the Cross of Isabella the Catholic.
- A. B.: And you accepted it with no reservations?
- S. D.: I would have taken two of them!
- A. B.: You love your faults.
- S. D.: In my case, they're not faults. Let's clarify our political positions. I've always been against any sort of affiliation. You know very well that I'm the only Surrealist who ever refused to belong to any organization whatsoever. I was never a Stalinist or a cat's-paw of any association. Illustrious members of the Falanga tried to get me interested; but I've never committed myself.
- A. B.: Wasn't the Spanish order an act of defiance, and didn't it embarrass you terribly?
- S. D.: On the contrary! Its *smallest* benefit was the trouble it created for me. Only people with a servant's mentality commit themselves. I prefer being a nobleman, and so I couldn't ask for anything better than being covered with all kinds of medals.
- A. B.: Including two-bit hardware from a general who won a civil war against certain Spanish intellectuals such as your friend Federico Garcia Lorca .... Isn't that an act of treason toward Lorca?

- S. D.: Excuse me, but I've got to let you in on a congenital trait of mine. As the bourgeois son of an attorney in Figueras, I began life with a spectacular betrayal of the class I come from, the bourgeoisie; and ever since, I've always touted the virtues of aristocracy and monarchy. I'm a monarchist in the most absolute sense of the word. At the same time, I'm an anarchist; anarchy and monarchy are poles apart and yet they're two of a kind, for both aim at absolute power. I accepted the Cross of Isabella the Catholic from Franco's hands, simply because Soviet Russia never offered me the Lenin Prize. I would have accepted it. I'd even consent to a badge of honor from Mao Tse-tung.
- A. B.: Does your glory lack Mao Tse-tung?
- S. D.: Especially Mao Tse-tung.
- A. B.: You study certain writings of his?
- S. D.: At the moment, I am meditating upon one of his poems that is going to permit the introduction of a new dance for young people of today. What's most important now is this rising-generation, and a new style ... Just look at Mademoiselle Onda on the couch over there, *she* represents the younger generation. I hope that by the end of the week she'll be hung up like a sublime swine on a ceiling where she'll perform super-exhibitionist contortions during a new dance accompanied by poems of Mao Tse-tung's.
- A. B.: Shall we totally exhaust our political conversation?
- S. D.: Fine.
- A. B.: You feel perfectly at ease in the role of a traitor. What is your goal?
- S. D.: The very opposite of Picasso's. For Dali, politics, like everything else, has to be resolved by a visceral image. If you look at the eyes of people on the Left, especially the Far Left, you'll notice a kind of white blur on the edges, the so-called rheum. People on the Right, monarchists, and cruel men like Phillip II, stand up straight instead of crawling about and have no physical sign of human sympathy—a totally useless trait. Radical Socialists, Communists, and all Left-Wingers have a continuous secretion that forms in the eye and comes from their love of humanity. Oh, how they love humanity! They harp on it and dwell on it constantly. I do respect them because in a monarch's court there have to be a lot of Sartre's. And an occasional bomb thrown at the king is desirable from time to time as a stimulus for him.
- A. B.: Assuming that you *are* a Rightist and a partisan of monarchy, I find it contradictory of you to spend half the year in a democracy like the United States—whether or not it's a failure. I knew you there at the very beginning, and you're still at the same address, a posh hotel on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fifth Street.
- S. D.: My exceptional ethic is unerring. I always live where the most money is.
- A. B.: But is that reason enough to live in America? You wound up there almost by chance, didn't you?
- S. D.: That was thirty-five years ago. I live there now because I'm always in the middle of a cascade of checks that keep pouring in like diarrhea. In addition, America is the only country in the world making enormous advances in the technology of science. Cybernetics is close by. And at this very moment in New York, people are working on my earthly immortality. Hibernation specialists are preparing complicated cylinders to lengthen my life expectancy greatly. I'm only human.

- A. B.: To what extent are you really involved in life in New York?
- S. D.: I see a large number of bankers, interesting homosexuals that I've never come across in other countries, and enthusiastic Daliists.
- A. B.: Do you ever do any paintings on commission there?
- S. D.: Never.
- A. B.: But you have in the past.
- S. D.: Perhaps.
- A. B.: Are you proud that you did?
- S. D.: Not at all.
- A. B.: You do admit that those paintings are inferior to the others.
- S. D.: All I'm interested in is the money I get for them.
- A. B.: Well, then why does the "Divine Dali" agree to put his name on things that are less than divine? I have a specific painting in mind, one I personally don't care for: your *Last Supper* at the National Gallery in Washington, D. C.
- S. D.: According to statistics, that painting you personally don't care for is *the* best seller of all modern paintings. There are more post-card reproductions of it than any da Vinci or Raphael. My strategy worked: At a certain point I decided to do paintings that would be more popular than anything else in the world. My performance was marvelous. I would even go so far as to say that that painting is a thousand times better than all of Picasso's works put together. That one single painting!
- A. B.: Do you really feel that surpassing Picasso is a distinction?
- S. D.: Scarcely, scarcely. I consider myself a very mediocre painter. I have always affirmed that I'm a very mediocre painter. I simply believe that I'm a better painter than my contemporaries. If you prefer, they're much worse than I am.
- A. B.: Let's get back to politics .... Your policy on the American check doesn't quite satisfy me.
- S. D.: There are two things: the check, and the technology leading to hibernation.
- A. B.: What are you like when you find yourself face to face with Dali in a moment of solitude?
- S. D.: Let me take advantage of what you're saying and do a bit of PR work for another book that will make cuckolds of you all. Albin Michel has just commissioned me to do a book entitled: *A Letter from Salvador Dali to Salvador Dali*. There won't be any Alain Bosquet monopolizing me; the book will be much more intimate, and I'll say what I have to say to Dali himself.
- A. B.: What does the France of the Fifth Republic represent to you? Does it seem viable? Do you regard Moscow as an example of total wisdom, prudence, and flexibility? Does China impress you as being a dangerous and exciting state? Is America merely a commercial undertaking that succeeds without an ideology? I'm asking all these questions in bulk. What is your situation in the modern-day world?
- S. D.: I expressed my opinion in a confidential meeting at the *École Polytechnique* before the students, who wore white gloves and uniform. At this point in our world, Dali is becoming more and more of a Stalinist. And this happens to be an automatic reaction on my part; as soon as some one is insulted and trampled upon, I raise him up again. Stalin is my present passion, and I consider him the most important personality of our era.



Stalin and perhaps Mao Tse-tung . . . but especially Stalin, for he is the truly great cuckold of modern times.

A. B.: Could you explain that?

S. D.: Stalin forged the Red Army and military power in Russia. He's a blacksmith. Blacksmiths have always formed fraternities and sects. The moment a blacksmith of this kind comes to power, he creates male and female symbols: the hammer and sickle as emblems of an ideology. That's what Vulcan did in ancient Greece. It was Vulcan who forged Achilles' shield while his wife, Aphrodite, was being seduced by Apollo.

A. B.: What becomes of Stalin in this flood of inextricable explanations?

S. D.: He thought he was forging the shield of socialism and Communism, ideologies that no longer exist. Stalin furnished us with the best weapon to defend the European monarchies which are going to be restored in four or five years. He'll do what Kaiser Wilhelm II thought he was doing against what he labeled the Yellow Peril. Personally, I'm extremely fond of the Yellow Peril. It's going to be the stake in a war, and I just love wars.

A. B.: Then you believe there'll be a sort of unification of the entire white race?

S. D.: Naturally. Karl Marx suffered from the same kind of illusions as poor Le Corbusier, whose recent death filled me with an immense joy. Both of them were architects. Le Corbusier was a pitiable creature working in reinforced concrete. Mankind will soon be landing on the moon, and just imagine: that buffoon claimed we'd be taking along sacks of reinforced concrete. His heaviness and the heaviness of the concrete deserve one another. Thanks to IBM machines, social classes are going to disappear, and the whole universe will be cuckolded. We are advancing far more heroically to a struggle of the races.

A. B.: You still haven't told me what you think of present-day France. To what extent do you find the Fifth Republic rotten, slightly rotten, over-intellectual, etc. Whatever you do, don't be too nice!

S. D.: The government doesn't strike me as sufficiently rotten. I like a regime that's so corrupt as to be ready for the reestablishment of a traditional monarchy. France has to be more rotten, much more rotten!

A. B.: Then you find France acceptable?

S. D.: General de Gaulle's administration is a transitory regime on the way to monarchy. Monarchy will be restored first in Spain, the day that General Franco decides.

A. B.: Decides or deceases?

S. D.: Decides. You know it's very difficult to decease.

A. B.: You're evading my questions about France. You lived here before the war. Does anything seem different to you, or less free? France has become a second-class country. How does her art, her intellectual life, strike you? Hasn't something fundamentally given way?

S. D.: No doubt about it: the avant-garde's no longer in Paris, now it's in New York. Of all the new painters doing Pop or Op Art, the furthest-out, the most unusual are in New York. A few months ago, I went to the annual exhibition at the Salon de Mai in Paris, and I couldn't find a single Op artist. At that very moment in New York, there were ten shows of Op Art, and the Museum of Modern Art is filled with it.

A. B.: All the same, the idea originated in Paris. After all, Vasarely lives here.

S. D.: The New Yorkers' approach to the problem was totally paranoid and absurd. Here, as you know, whatever a person may do, he is always under the sway of Monsieur Descartes' intelligence. Everything instantly withers and grows dusty. What France really needs is a good kick in the ass from

America. I'm obviously talking about art and painting

## SECOND CONVERSATION

**S**ame setting in the Hôtel Meurice. Before the interview, Dali and Alain Bosquet sign the contract with the French publisher of this volume. Dali rips off Alain Bosquet's eyeglasses, perches them on his own nose, and, in order not to see anything, asks Captain Peter Moore to blindfold him. He then signs in the dark. The ocelot seems more nervous than on the previous day. Dali, with gleams of joy and a certain terror in his eye, grabs the animals by the neck and projects it on the ceiling. Alain Bosquet says: "You were marvelous yesterday." Dali replies. "As always." During the interview, three cadets of Saint-Cyr burst in, irritating the animal even more. It stalks about like the wild beast that it is, and at a given moment rushes headlong at a vase containing twelve superb roses. Its feline impulse ends as a simple and gentle meal of petals. After the interview, Dali will say to Alain Bosquet: "You are a semi-Daliist. Once you die, you'll be a thousand-percent Daliist . . . Next time, let's talk about death. I just adore death." Dali reflects and then emends: "Sunday, October 31, . . . no, I can't cuckold God. We'll work on the first of Novemer, I'll cuckold the dead."

ALAIN BOSQUET: Shall we discuss painting today?

SALVADOR DALI: Painting is my least important aspect. The thing that really counts is the almost imperialist structure of my genius. Painting is only an infinitesimal part of that genius. I express myself, as you know, with jewelry, flowerbeds, eroticism, mysticism.

A. B.: This is what you say now. Have you always said so?

S. D.: Always, absolutely always. I've linked the role of painting to simple color photography and the exploitation of the *superfine* images of concrete irrationality.

A. B.: At what point did you make that decision?

S. D.: Two years before I joined the Surrealist group.

A. B.: I find your answer subjective and quite inconsistent with what you really are.

S. D.: Yes, I'm supposedly a rather good painter.

A. B.: Don't tell me that you're uninterested in other people's opinions—whether it's my generation or young people of twenty. And don't tell me that you're unconcerned about whether Dali's renown as a painter endures.

S. D.: I believe that in the realm of painting, very few of my things will last.

A. B.: For the first time since we met, I find you excessively modest.

S. D.: Modesty is not exactly my specialty. As far as the pictorial goes, my sole ambitions were aimed at optical truth even before I came to Paris. I've always eulogized color photography. I've always eulogized the extremely backward attitude of the means of expression as defined by André Breton. I have always claimed and still claim that the ideas of Surrealism will work only when they are painted to perfection and in a traditional manner.

A. B.: As far as other people are concerned you are somebody. Everything you do is sometimes severely criticized, with a kind of irritation and even ignorance. You simply won't refrain from being a clown.

S. D.: Not a clown, not a clown. Our terminology has got to be precise: I am the *Divine Dali*. You know that the word "harlequin" is synonymous with Hermes. The incarnation of Hermes, with Mercury as a go-between, makes me a clown, and consequently a harlequin.

A. B.: In France more than abroad, people distinguish between your shenanigans

and your paintings. They say more or less: “We fully accept Dali as a painter because he’s an important artist.” Sometimes, to simplify matters, people add that you’re the Hieronymus Bosch of the modern age. As for your actions, most people are astonished, stupefied, and dazzled for an hour or so, but tire quickly.

- S. D.: People also claim that I’m a reactionary. I took my first lessons in a good, average school, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid. I had a professor who came to correct the students’ drawings and wore a top hat and white gloves. That man had a photographic eye, a superphotographic eye.
- A. B.: What, in your opinion, is the importance of painting in its most incontestable and most daring period, between 1928 and 1934? I have in mind a certain violently erotic canvas now in André Breton’s possession.
- S. D.: I’ve made cuckolds of everybody, especially the people who stayed with the first pictures of Surrealism. Only my latter-day paintings, and they alone, have an imperial ambition from an artistic point of view, and it’s only in them that I’ve integrated everything. This summer, I met the principal Pop and Op painters; in my last painting, I annexed everything new in those two forms of art, and at the same time I’ve rendered the tragic myth of Millet’s *Angelus*. From now on I shall never stop painting and repainting Millet’s *Angelus*.
- A. B.: You haven’t given me a clear-cut answer: what position does painting occupy in your activities as a whole?
- S. D.: Painting is only one of the means of expression of my total genius, which exists when I write, when I live, when in some way or other I manifest my *magic*.
- A. B.: What magic?
- S. D.: At this very moment, a young lady whom I don’t know and who has just come in, perhaps to ask me questions in regard to a possible TV interview, is sitting next to us. Her knees are magnificent. And these knees of hers will be a point of departure for my magic. Later on, I’ll use them as an element in my painting, an extraordinary opus, the foundation of which will be her knees and her face. It can’t possibly fail. That’s my genius! Why, everything is in that transfiguration: you believe we’re going to collaborate on a book; she believes she’s going to drag me in front of a TV camera . . . . The world’s a cuckold from beginning to end. It’s important for my personality to draw from each instant the very tissue of my existence and of my capacity for self-regeneration. In this second, the center of the universe is located magically on the knees of this young lady who just happened to come here.
- A. B.: I should like to know.
- S. D.: A painting is such a minor thing compared with the magic I radiate.
- A. B.: Let’s be rational for a moment. For myself and for all of us, it’s your paintings that count most, and some of them go back forty years.
- S. D.: They don’t count pictorially. They’re badly painted.
- A. B.: I don’t agree. What do you mean by “badly painted”?
- S. D.: I mean that the *Divine Dali* of today would be incapable of doing even a mediocre copy of a canvas by Bouguereau or Meissonier, both of whom could paint a thousand times better than I can.
- A. B.: You’ve already handed me that argument.
- S. D.: Obviously, I could do better than Picasso; he wouldn’t even know what colors to use.
- A. B.: The point is that you are one of the most precise artists in the twentieth cen-

- ture—precise in the traditional sense of the word.
- S. D.: No! I'm one of those who know how to paint slightly! If you compare me with any classical painter whatsoever, then I'm an absolute nonentity.
- A. B.: Captain Moore wants to say a word or two—
- S. D.: No, no. Keep on talking.
- A. B.: One might think you're acquiring a taste for it. In a hundred years, what will be left of your alleged magic, your charisma, your various avant-garde activities?
- S. D.: Only one thing: the illumination I had in the middle of the railroad station at Perpignan. For the first time, I found a possibility to continue the history of painting by superimposing the eyes of parabolic and microphysical flies. We're finally about to obtain the third dimension with machines that produce images emerging from the canvas or appearing to plunge deep into it. After Velasquez and Vermeer, it was believed that we could not progress any further in spatial illusion. We had attained the maximum. Today, we can really make images loom into space even though they don't exist spatially. This process will revive the artist's interest in painting objective reality . . . . Curious canvases will remain, for anthologies: a painting by so-and-so. They'll say that the Surrealist era had Dali, that he was a more cultivated and better painter than anyone else. All this is secondary. The main thing is that I was the first after Vermeer to renew a technique. Vermeer's technique was to superimpose successive and very fine layers of paint to create an illusion of atmospheric space. His miracle was using products of the earth and a simple brush to obtain the illusion of space. Structures almost invisible to the naked eye produced spatial images. I started where Vermeer left off . . .
- A. B.: You're telling me about technique, and I'm talking about art, a world that once was yours, and I wonder whether it still is: an erotic, subconscious, and paranoid universe.
- S. D.: That world has to be simplified and cut down.
- A. B.: Why go by the theory and the notion of progress? A purely sensory work of art suffices, and I feel that in the ranks of Surrealism you achieved an *oeuvre* of that sort.
- S. D.: What can be more sensory than my discovery in the station at Perpignan, a discovery based uniquely on the sense of vision and located right in the retina? Effects of this kind are comparable to hallucinogenic drugs like mescaline. Wasn't my sensorial awareness total?
- A. B.: There's no proof that your sensation was creative. I wish you could convince yourself of the need to rehabilitate your canvases deep within yourself, in a period when you might overpolish them as meticulously as possible. For example, like Raphael.
- S. D.: I am a great courtier, a *cortegiano*, and like all courtesans I kiss the asses of all important people and all kings, including Raphael and Velasquez. I'll kiss the ass of anyone I feel is superior to me. I kiss the asses of angelic beings. Let me go back to modern-day discoveries: Cybernetic mechanisms permit the creation of a system of reflections concentrated on the same plane but appearing to form images four inches nearer or farther, before or behind that plane. We'll soon be able to form images that seem to be a yard away from the basic surface. With the help of all the points, and of all the images thus formed, we'll attain a divisionist painting seconding that of Seurat at the beginning of the century. Instead of being a mosaic of tiny points as in Seurat, painting will be truly situated in space. This will bring back an *ultra-hack* reality. I've always said that after Pop and Op, we should experience a new triumph of hack art. Take a look at that abominable religious plaster on my mantel; it depicts an ancient goddess and it's crowned by a

- really hack helmet. A symbol!
- A. B.: In what way can all these scientific inventions and these new approaches to attracting or deceiving the eye integrate in a painting? Do you really think you'll achieve a kind of synthesis and thus go beyond progress by once again employing the prestige of art?
- S. D.: This time we'll use real photographs. With photographs and new spatial techniques, I'll achieve a synthesis that we might actually call classic, and even *absolutely classic*. Images will remain photographic as always and from these images the moving points and lines come. The element of genius is obtaining a surface full of tiny points as in the era of pointillism, except that for the eye there will appear to be different variable distances and spatial locations between them.
- A. B.: So then the entire canvas will be multidimensional.
- S. D.: The entire canvas will be full of dots. The spectator will feel as if he could plunge his hands through those dots. They'll form whatever image the artist intends: a buttock or a lizard, and the photographic impression in relief will always be one of the goals of the canvas. The painter will merely have to emphasize the points in some way and amplify them by a very light touch of his brush. And with the aid of painting, I shall render that touch as masterly as possible. It was known in the epoch of Velasquez as *la bravura del toco*, the bravura of touch. I, too, shall be doing action painting, my canvas will be made up of millions of tiny dots in all the colors, each dot will have the violence of the entire painting, as in Georges Mathieu. I repeat, each dot will have its importance because it will situate itself, for the eye, in space and at a desired distance from the common surface. I shall obtain a Mathieu just for the ring around the eyes. It will also be Op Art because of the photographic return to the object.
- A. B.: But what about the subject of the painting?
- S. D. The subject will remain Surrealist.
- A. B.: What does that mean today?
- S. D.: Any paranoid or subconscious situation: William Tell, Myself as a Little Girl, By the Sea, The Cosmogony of Existence .... All these possible subjects will be integrated with my ideas on anti-gravitation.
- A. B.: There you are, you're returning to a clarification of painting such as you were doing thirty years ago. And aren't all those inventions serving you in the name of painting?
- S. D.: No!
- A. B.: Is that true? And isn't it unfair to speak only of spatial magic as your discovery at the station in Perpignan or anywhere else?
- S. D.: Magic is all that interests me. The impression I received in Perpignan isn't useful for just painting. I use it in my writings, my erotic ideas, my notions of justice. My most recent preoccupation is a renewal of the spirit of the laws, and I intend to surpass Montesquieu. The book I'm working on will astound the world, because it is devoted to legal problems. It's not for nothing that I'm having dinner tonight with Monsieur Tixier-Vignancourt. I should like to put into practice an idea of Teilhard de Chardin's and to join him in proclaiming that the universe converges in several places. This magic concentration is not far from the existential *angst* of Pascal. When you have me talk about painting, I make the railroad station of Perpignan converge on my pictorial work, simply so as not to fragment and scatter myself.
- A. B.: Between your ancient bust crowned with a hack helmet, and your draft of a

tri- or multidimensional surface, I see the skeleton of a bird and next to it an ultranaturalist drawing of yours. Are you doing a lot of sketches of this sort, and if so, why?

S. D.: It's a plan for a vase. The skeleton is one of the finest I've come across. I'll correct it in the drawing, the spoonbill will be duplicated, and the two of them will be done in massive gold in the shape of a vessel. You're well aware that the profound structure of my personality is binary: I'm double-headed and twofold. There are two Dalis. For the book I'm doing, I've literally divided myself in two; the anarchist Dali is going to write a letter to His Excellency Salvador Dali, an apostolic Roman Catholic. Besides the vase I spoke of, there will be a second double vessel, it will be made of quartz and be based on the motif of the bird skeleton: red wine will flow from one side and white wine from the other.

A. B.: Do you find this kind of commercial activity worthy of a painter?

S. D.: It's been going on since the Renaissance. Leonardo da Vinci did gardening. He also designed the garters for the Pope's Swiss Guard. He designed a whole mass of everyday objects. My friends were up in arms when I began designing ties and wallpaper twenty-five years ago. They called it a crying shame. They said: "Dali is prostituting himself by designing neckties." I think they were simply jealous because *they* hadn't received the offers. Ten years later, Joan Miró, Picasso, and associates began designing upholstery patterns, tablecloths, plates, and hundreds of other less noble objects.



**THIRD CONVERSATION**

**S**ame setting, same people passing through. Onda, the dancer, is present, and Alain Bosquet asks her: “What does Dali do for you?”

“We gaze at one another.”

“With your fingers?”

“Hardly.”

ALAIN BOSQUET: Dali, today, on All Saints’ Day, your visitors are sparser, the ocelot is lying down, the roses are asleep, and instead of sitting pompously on chairs, here we are flopped out on a sofa. You’d like to talk about death, here in the most ignoble bourgeois setting possible and in the softness of red cushions.

SALVADOR DALI: I value death greatly. After eroticism, it’s the subject that interests me the most.

A. B.: Do you tremble at the thought of death? Or have you illusively mastered it? And can you offer us any original solution vis-à-vis a problem that you cannot sidestep? I even tend to wonder whether you might not face the thought of death with a serenity contrary to all the mechanical manifestations of your whole being?

S. D.: Ever since the days when I was a babe in arms, the moment anyone spoke to me about death as an inevitable event, I have always shouted, “Lies!” I’ve always felt that in the last minute everything would work out. And I haven’t changed my mind. If I believed in death, in the traditional sense of the word, that is to say, in decay and nothingness, I would start trembling like a leaf, and anxiety would keep me from swallowing anything. But that’s not my belief at all.

A. B.: And you’ve never experienced that anxiety?

S. D.: Only on the sly.

A. B.: What do you mean?

S. D.: Since I am not possessed of faith, which is a Godgiven grace, I rely on my studies, my cosmogony, and all that the special sciences of my era bring me. I concede that the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church is right in regard to the immortality of my soul. My past history, my family, my father—an atheist lawyer—have not allowed me to find faith. Without this faith, I accept the conquests of science that shall deliver me from death.

A. B.: You say you have no faith, and yet you’re the most ardent of Catholics.

S. D.: Precisely. Today, on All Saints’ Day, I sent a floral wreath to the tomb of Le Corbusier, because on the one hand I despised him and on the other hand I’m a complete coward. After all, if the Great Beyond really does exist, I’ve got to follow a certain protocol so as to have a minimum of guarantees. I suffer like Pascal.

A. B.: Pascal bet on God in a rather base fashion, as if he were playing poker.

S. D.: I don’t think that Pascal did any double-dealing with God. I find the error in his cosmogonical conception much more serious. According to Pascal, man is placed in an infinite universe and becomes an infinitesimal part of that universe. He didn’t believe in man’s scientific powers, and he got lost in the sidereal immensities of art. He felt a terror in his awareness and he got metaphysical goose pimples. Today, Dali is completely opposed to all those ideas. He is ardently opposed to the Jesuits, and particularly the biggest Jesuit of modern times, Teilhard de Chardin, who claims that the universe is unity, and



that it grows larger every day. I believe that the universe is no bigger than a butterfly and that it never stops shrinking. The universe is converging, not widening. It's shriveling up, it's concentrated on one point in space, and for me that point is the railroad station in Perpignan. Thus Dali has become the entire universe at this present moment on All Saints' Day! And even now, the very second that I am talking to you, the universe is getting smaller and smaller. Le Corbusier—

A. B.: Your Corbusier is starting to bore me.

S. D.: Le Corbusier simply went down for the third time, because of his reinforced concrete and his architectures, the ugliest and most unacceptable buildings in the world. All the same, if God exists, He'd expect me to act like a gentleman. So I ordered some everlasting flowers for the anniversary of his death, next year, and I cried out: "Long live anti-gravitation." This year he had all the excessive honors imaginable at his corpse. Monsieur André Malraux himself delivered a speech. Since he's my enemy, and since no one will remember the anniversary in years to come, I'll be the only person putting flowers on his grave that day.

A. B.: I can't see what pleasure you'll derive from paying homage to a man you despised.

S. D.: The stupider my enemies, the more I strive to shower them with earthly honors. A maximum of *noblesse* for those bastards! There's a Velasquez painting that shows a victor squeezing with unparalleled delicacy the neck of the loser at the very moment that the latter is handing him the keys to the city. I make a point of exhibiting great regard for my enemies. Besides, the deader Le Corbusier, the more alive am I. There's a feeling of contrast that activates all my other reflexes. From now on I'll relish the tiniest sardine with gusto if I simultaneously think of all my friends who've died, particularly those who were shot or martyred. They instantly turn into Daliists for me. And in return, I'll be eating the sardine with zest because I'll be doing it on behalf of the dead. For their sake, I'll be a glutton.

A. B.: Is that what your magic boils down to? You spoke of a kind of personal mystique. Is that how you hope to gain survival in the souls of others?

S. D.: Survival or appeasement; when the others die, they become Daliists.

A. B.: Your formula is vague.

S. D.: The moment they die, they start working for the "Divine Dali."

A. B.: That's a Gongorist formula. Does this self-styled divinity really exist? Does it have any value whatsoever in regard to your fleshly exterior?

S. D.: According to formulas recently established by Japanese scientists, it seems that the real Dali is not the one I'm looking for but the one who *really* existed before me.

A. B.: And who has nothing to do with your physical person?

S. D.: Oh, but he does, because my physical person is a kingdom. Kings, even those of illegitimate birth, are, symbolically, born of God. These kings are merely my own ambassadors.

A. B.: I find your logic aberrant and full of holes. Is it easy for you to live with the idea that you are going to join another Dali, an eternal one, to live with this idea while you're still a man of flesh, who thinks, and acts?

S. D.: I've hit upon the solution. Every day, I kill the image of my poor brother, with my hands, with kicks, and with dandyism. Today, I made him take flowers to the cemetery. He is my dark God, for he and I are Pollux and Castor; I am Pollux, the immortal twin, and he is the mortal one. I assassinate him regularly,

for the “Divine Dali” cannot have anything in common with this former terrestrial being.

A. B.: A private mystique!

S. D.: No, a mythology!

A. B.: To what extent does your brand of faith replace the true faith you claim not to have?

S. D.: The question was settled on June 5, 1950, the day our mutual friend, Dr. Pierre Rouméguière read me his thesis on the dioscuric myth of Dali. For the first time in my life, amid incomparable thrills, I felt the absolute truth: a psychoanalytical thesis revealed the sensational conflict at the basis of my tragic structure: the ineluctable presence, deep within me, of my dead brother, whom my parents had been so fond of that when I was born they gave me his name, Salvador. My shock at the doctor’s disclosure was as violent as at a revelation. I now understood the terror besetting me every time I stepped into my parents’ bedroom and saw the photo of my deceased brother: a lovely child all decked out in lace. The photo was touched up regularly, so that I, by way of contrast, spent all night picturing my ideal brother in a state of total putrefaction. I managed to drop off to sleep only at the thought of my own death and by accepting the idea of lying at rest inside the coffin. Pierre Rouméguière made me realize that an archetypal myth like that of Castor and Pollux had a sense of essential, visceral reality for me. An experience of the viscera justified the mental structure of my being.

A. B.: That, too, is a kind of faith.

S. D.: No, not a faith! It’s physical proof of a discovery lucidly explained by a scientist with all the necessary guarantees.

A. B.: Is this explanation enough for you as a key to your being?

S. D.: If only for my psychological makeup.

A. B.: Does your certainty prevent you from believing in Catholicism?

S. D.: It doesn’t prevent a thing; if anything it would act as an encouragement .... But faith, in the Catholic sense, is not a grace that one can obtain by the will or by discipline. God alone grants this grace, and it is always perfectly irrational. There is no reason whatsoever why God should, or should not, grant me this simple faith. At the moment, I do not have it.

A. B.: Does your scientific revelation—or myth—allow you to clear up certain doubts you may have about yourself and the future of your fleshly covering? Can you rid yourself of true anxiety vis-à-vis death?

S.D.: Anxiety returns every time I feel that things will work out. But, in the end, they always do.

A. B.: You feel that everything’s for the best in the best of all possible worlds?

S. D.: Yes. Every day marks a further degree of progress. Faith may be imminent, despite everything. I shall dwell frequently on the notions of hibernation and survival, they are very much on my mind, and the very thought of them overwhelms me with joy.

A. B.: Let’s try to be more precise. Does your entire hope hinge on a simple scientific development or in a recipe that would scarcely satisfy any technician?

S. D.: I firmly believe that science is going to discover methods of deep-freezing that will permit a repeated prolongation of life. Intelligence will not be the precipitating force, for almost all of us are asses; the computers will be doing it of *their own accord*. We already have prodigious cybernetic machines far superior to the people using them; they even get away with serious pranks on the scientists employing them for their questionable programing, for sometimes the comput-

ers act like cretins, which is a marvelous retort to the insufferable logic of human beings. I've received highly complex reports on the preservation of brain cells, which can be kept intact at a certain temperature. The practical aspect may seem fanciful for the next fifty years, but I'm convinced that sooner or later we'll put our knowledge to useful work. Three weeks ago, Japanese scientists revived the brain of a cat, which had been in a state of hibernation for ten days. I can't help being an optimist. I'll arrive just in time to grab the last discovery and profit from the possibility of survival.

A. B.: Shall we stop there for today?

S. D.: Oh, no.

A. B.: Well, then let's go on

S. D.: Fine, we'll talk about real deaths, first of all the history of painting. I do prefer familiar deaths.

A. B.: Your own?

S. D.: Yes, my personal corpses. Those of top quality and who make me feel eternally guilt ridden. The first is Federico Garcia Lorca. The moment I heard of his death, I reacted like a villain. Someone brought me the newspaper, I saw that he had been shot, and I cried out: "Ole!" That's what the Spanish say when a toreador executes a particularly well-performed movement before the blood-stained beast. I felt that for Federico Garcia Lorca, this was the finest way to die: as a victim of the Civil War.

A. B.: I find it disgusting to talk that way about the murder of a great poet.

S. D.: But it's so aesthetic! I've always been opposed to the folklore aspect of his poetry. He had an enormous dose of romanticism, something I find unacceptable. He was much too fond of the Gypsies, their songs, their green eyes, their flesh that looked as if it were molded with olives and jasmine: all the crap that poets have always loved. He had an annoying tendency to consider a Gypsy more poetic than a civil war, whereas I—

A. B.: You love war, of course!

S. D.: I loved the costumes of the Civil War, with all those frogs and loops and gewgaws. It's a much more sparkling picture, a more painterly one, and it represents the *law*. I love the law, and I hate Gypsies, their life always has something anal about it. They have a congenital uncleanliness and a romanticism that nauseates me; that's why I defended the Civil Guard, whose anuses are clean, against the Gypsies, whose anuses are *not* clean. I ought to add, however, in defense of present-day Gypsies, that things are changing.

A. B.: What do you mean?

S. D.: The Beatniks assume the disgusting and slovenly appearance of Gypsies, but theirs is a different generation, and their abundance of hair is the result of a profound angelic quest. Their conceptions, and their search for paroxysm is contrary to what the Spanish and the Russian Gypsies are looking for. The bodily trance is at the opposite pole of the anal life of Gypsies: the Beatniks aim, in their drastic writhings, at shedding as many hairs as possible.

A. B.: I'll pass over your own paroxysms. But I'll go along with your game: hair grows longer but hairs shed?

S. D.: The Beatniks and the Beatles are angelic mutations, as in the Middle Ages.

A. B.: Let's get back to Lorca. How were you two getting along at the time he wrote his *Ode to Salvador Dali*?

S. D.: He was homosexual, as everyone knows, and madly in love with me. He tried to screw me twice .... I was extremely annoyed, because I wasn't homosexual, and I wasn't interested in giving in. Besides, it hurts. So nothing came of it. But I

felt awfully flattered vis-à-vis the prestige. Deep down, I felt that he was a great poet and that I did owe him a tiny bit of the Divine Dali's asshole. He eventually bagged a young girl, and she replaced me in the sacrifice. Failing to get me to put my ass at his disposal, he swore that the girl's sacrifice was matched by his own: it was the first time he had ever slept with a woman.

A. B.: How were your relations with other Spanish poets? Did you know Miguel Hernandez?

S. D.: No.

A. B.: Did you know Rafael Alberti, whose life took such a bad turn?

S. D.: Alberti visited me just once, and then he became a Communist.

A. B.: Did you know Juan Ramón Jiménez?

S. D.: Not only did I know him very well, but it was against him that I committed the cruelest act of my life.

A. B.: Yet according to the stories of his contemporaries, he was one of the cruelest men in his generation.

S. D.: Yes, but Dali is far crueler. Besides, I was with Luis Buñuel. Both of us were strongly influenced by Nietzsche. We were in a bar.

A. B.: Where was this?

S. D.: In Madrid. We had resolved to send a poison-pen letter to one of the great celebrities of Spain, our goal was pure subversion.

A. B.: Was this during the monarchy?

S. D.: Yes. We could have done what Breton advocated, that is to say, go down to the street and start shooting into a crowd. But instead of exposing ourselves, we said: "Who is the most prestigious man that we could insult?" We hit upon two names, Manuel de Falla, the composer, and Juan Ramón Jiménez, the poet. We drew straws, and Jiménez won. As a matter of fact, we had just left him in a state of soporiness, and he had said to us: "I've found the group of the future. Dali is a genius, Buñuel is insane, violent, passionate, and he's producing the most extraordinary things. Federico Garcia Lorca is a wonderful poet." So we composed a frenzied and nasty letter of incomparable violence and addressed it to Juan Ramón Jiménez. We told him he was a dirty bastard, a queer, we went further than any impudence ever dreamt of by the Surrealists. We dumped on all his writings, including *Platero*. Buñuel developed qualms, and was hesitant about mailing the letter. I was slightly irritated, and so we finally sent it off. The next day, Juan Ramón Jiménez was absolutely prostrate. He said: "I just don't understand. I'll never comprehend how people who are so ardent and admiring and sensitive in my presence, can send me such arrant nonsense. I don't understand such a demented outburst of filth against me." In the Spain of those days, an inexplicable event was in order, and we succeeded in creating one.

A. B.: Who are your other personal corpses?

S. D.: Every time a friend dies, I have to contrive some way of getting myself to believe that I'm his murderer.

A. B.: Does that help to console you or dazzle you?

S. D.: Both. For example, when the Marquis de Cuevas died, I said to myself: "It's I who killed him." Since at bottom, I'm quite a Jesuit, I know that what I say isn't true; but for a whole day or a quarter of an hour, I have the pleasure of thinking: "I'm the culprit." This gives me powerful feelings of guilt. Ultimately, my reason tells me I'm not responsible, and I fall asleep on a soft featherbed with the most sanctimonious satisfaction in the world. If some day Peter Moore, my military attaché, were to die, I would say. . .

- A. B.: "I'm the murderer."
- S. D.: Yes, during the meal . . . I'll find a way. Since I'll be lying, everyone will be content.
- A. B.: I'd like to ask you about the masochism and sadism, and the mixture of both, within you.
- S. D.: Mixture! Hmm! Once I received a lady who had written me, and who had previously met André Breton, because she was mad about the Surrealists. She had a very formal card printed with all the subtleties: *Madame X, sadomasochist*. It was a whole program.
- A. B.: And what about the dead in painting? I know that out of a kind of defiance, you consider Millet, Meissonier, and Bouguereau geniuses.
- S. D.: They are present whether living or dead.
- A. B.: Let's go as far back as possible. What do you think of the School of Siena?
- S. D.: A bunch of nonentities! For me, painting really begins with the discovery of the classical methods of mixing oils.
- A. B.: Van Eyck? What do you feel when viewing the Van Paelen Madonna or Van Eyck's depiction of the *Madonna of the Chancellor Rollin*, at the Louvre? Or *The Mystical Lamb* in Ghent, even though this latter canvas was practically done on commission.
- S. D.: Dali never feels any emotion whatsoever before a work of art.
- A. B.: Since when?
- S. D.: Since always. I pause erotically at certain works, but I remain impassive. The thing that really draws me to a painting, especially to Ingres' nudes or any other nudes of the same period, is the erotic aspect. In my adolescence, copying these works served as an excuse for certain special practices. In the classics, the erotic and the feeling of death interest me more than so-called artistic perfection.
- A. B.: Does the religious sentiment in Van Eyck leave you cold?
- S. D.: I don't know what it's made up of. God is someone whom I don't know, and I'm not concerned with finding out who he may be.
- A. B.: You don't mean to tell that you have no religious feeling at all. Do you really feel nothing before Roman capitals?
- S. D.: Roman sculpture is a phenomenon of stereotyping and stylization. It's rhetorical sculpture.
- A. B.: When did you develop this total and grave indifference toward classical works of art?
- S. D.: I don't know what "my emotion" really means. I never emote about anything, even in life. I don't even emote in my love life.
- A. B.: Let me ask you the same question in a different way. Are you open to the notion of respect for historical concatenation? Do you have, within you, an imaginary museum?
- S. D.: The only thing that counts is images. I only care for the sum of information contained in old masters, just as an IBM machine functions solely by the sum of the elements that feed it. I'm passionately fond of anything I can learn from painting, and I'm not the least bit interested in the feeling of weakness I might show when viewing a work. One of the least questionable paintings I know, Velasquez's *Las Meniñas*, provided me with a cascade of astounding information. As for the spirit of this work, it accurately reproduces an epoch, and that's why I take off my hat to it. The people depicted offer me information of an incredible precision and I feel I know the painting down to the smell inhabiting the Infanta's house. Velasquez also teaches me something about light, reflec-

tions, and mirrors—and he teaches me a lot more than whole scientific volumes. His work is an inexhaustible treasure hoard of computation and exact data.

A. B.: Whatever your emotiveness may be, the information value doesn't prevent your deep veneration for Velasquez.

S. D.: As long as we don't mention emotiveness. I go and see the painting regularly, and I feel absolutely nothing, either in my heart or anywhere else. I doff my hat, and I'm content to say that the painting is sublime and beautiful. In my opinion, a thing is sublime only if we relieve it of even the tiniest bit of emotivity. Emotiveness is a banal and even base element of present-day life. Every time I've been moved emotionally, it's always been in a perfectly idiotic manner. For example, if I'm having a drink at the Café de Paris, and a military band goes by with flags flying, I suddenly fall prey to a kind of tiny thrill—the emotion you've been talking about—and it brings me tumbling down to everyone else's level. Or else, when I'm in America and I'm surrounded by ambassadors and the band starts playing the national anthem, the very moment everybody stands up, for a brief second something happens inside me: it's still the lowest and most whorish emotion imaginable. What I feel before Velasquez's *Meniñas* or a painting of Vermeer's is something very different: a commotion, a communication, a sudden awareness that multiplies. All the facets of the sublime—expressed or unexpressed—converging abruptly in a painting, and even an infinitesimal fragment of that painting. It was Proust who came out with the most remarkable articulation of that feeling when he spoke about indigestion in one of his characters. The man goes to admire a Vermeer; he only has to look at a stretch of wall in the painting, and that little corner makes up for all his discomfort. This isn't a matter of emotion: the effects of a simple case of indigestion are resolved in the contemplation of a work of art. Physiological effects are not values in themselves.

A. B.: What was your first reaction to Bosch's *Garden of Delights*?

S. D.: As is the case with every work of art that counts, it took me a long time to see the original; when I was young I was content to gaze at grade C reproductions. My father, the attorney, had gotten me photographs, and I wasn't the least bit concerned about seeing the originals until adulthood. I don't think I saw the real *Garden of Delights* until 1927 or 1928.

A. B.: You were already twenty-four years old.

S. D.: Yes. And I didn't enjoy the original as much as the reproductions. That's one of my permanent mottos: I always encourage people to reproduce my paintings because I find the reproductions much better than the originals.

A. B.: Was Bosch's painting in the Prado by then?

S. D.: No, it was still in the Escorial.

A. B.: People, simplifying, are in the habit of saying that you are the Hieronymus Bosch of our time. What connections exist between you and him?

S. D.: That's one of the worst misunderstandings about my personality. The monstrous exteriors and the frenzied imaginations of Bosch have led to people's comparing him to me. This is a very serious error; that people keep on repeating all the time. Bosch's monsters are the product of fog-shrouded Nordic forests and the awful indigestion of the Middle Ages. The results were symbolic characters, and satire took advantage of that gigantic diarrhea. It's a universe I'm not interested in. In fact, it's the exact opposite of monsters who are born in a different way and who, on the contrary, issue from the overplus of Mediterranean light. The grottos of the Mediterranean and the polished



surfaces of the water, as well as the rough feel of the oysters, crop up again in the tradition of Classical painting and in the climates of Spain and Italy. Those motifs are often reproduced in Pompeii, and there are elaborate examples in some of Raphael's works at the Vatican: hybrid beings, sphinxes transformed into fish, etc .... On the one hand, Bosch thought and painted in a mythical manner, deep in the musical mists of the North, and on the other hand, the far too garish light of the Mediterranean precipitated a need for hallucinations in harmony with the concise and Roman ideas of classical equilibrium. Bosch's creatures symbolize the plebeian ardor of knights taking off on a crusade: a challenge to humanism; the caricature of intelligence and a satire reaching into the intestines and bowels to sap the intelligence. Raphael, however, is a direct descendant of Greek antiquity, and there's nothing ravaging or ruthless about him. Why should anyone want to turn Dali, in the bright harmonious light of Cadaquez, into a Hieronymus Bosch?

A. B.: You overintellectualize, and you're underselling the imagination.

S. D.: Beyond imagination there's flair and instinct.

A. B.: You're forgetting the Spanish rape of Flanders ten years before Bosch's works.

Without the Spanish troops' assault on Flanders and all the savagery of your compatriots, there never would have been a Hieronymus Bosch. You can't deny that Phillip II was passionately fond of these Flemish works.

S. D.: I agree, and I'm well aware of his great love for El Greco. Philip II was very fond of tortured minds; it was part of his erotic nature.

A. B.: The monsters you speak of in Raphael are not alive: they're nearly all decorative motifs, drawn without due consideration.

S. D.: I personally find them more monstrous than the creatures produced by Bosch. We don't notice them because Raphael was modest enough to conceal them in ornamental forms. At first, we only perceive festoons. We have to consider them an integral part of the painting in order to be struck by their evocative presence. What I don't like about Bosch is his puerile side, the folklore, the elementary and plebeian aspect: in short, the things a peasant could have painted. Raphael and the Italians were refined enough to enclose their monsters in ornamental shapes. An attentive glance will reveal that these fantastic ravings go in through the nose and come out through the anus, and form leaf work at whose tips fetuses hatch and change into stars. I feel that this hitherto neglected part of classical painting is one of its most important components. And then, I'm sick and tired of being compared to Hieronymus Bosch.

## FOURTH CONVERSATION

**A**t the beginning of the interview, which for ten minutes remains a tête-a-tête between Salvador Dali and Alain Bosquet, the “Master” is reclining like an odalisque on the scarlet divan. The anonymity of the decor interferes more and more with the exuberant and prolix words, the eyes collide luxuriously with comfortable shapes, while the stridency of the words is absorbed by the brocades, the silks, and the dusty velvets. Presently, the dancer Onda and the Yugoslav novelist Miodrag Bulatovic enter.

SALVADOR DALI: I sense that I’m about to come out with violent declarations.

Yesterday I saw the younger generation making colossal fools of themselves. I was in a bar and I saw the *archangelical contortions* of those young people of all sexes—and of no sex—who, like Saint John of the Cross, were precisely trying to get rid of their sex.

ALAIN BOSQUET: Mademoiselle Onda, how do you do. Do you feel you’re getting rid of your sex?

S. D.: Of course she does, she’s getting rid of it by contorting her body.

A. B.: I took the liberty of inviting my friend, the Yugoslav writer Miodrag Bulatovic, to be present at your number, dear Salvador. Here he is, sitting in an armchair before us and turning deeper shades of green: I’m afraid that your ocelot is disturbingly svelte today, he’s jumping on Bulatovi’s back with an appetite that ought to please you. I suggest that we continue our historical account of painters of the past.

S. D.: We should always profit from our surroundings, so as to truffle our conversations with true facts. Since our Yugoslav friend is along, I’ll remind him that when I was young we would often see the future Marshal Tito in my native city of Figueras. It was right in the middle of the Civil War, and at the time he was still known as Josip Broz. He was a true dandy, and the populace was always amazed at his elegant grooming, his irresistible eyes, and his conqueror’s boots. And he always strolled about with a deadly-looking whip.

A. B.: Let’s talk about El Greco. I personally regard him as one of the most uneven painters in the history of art. His style had an incontestable deformation about it as well as invariable colors. What bothers me about him is that like Van Dyck, he can be recognized at first glance. For my money, true greatness includes a perfection that very nearly reaches anonymity.

S. D.: The best definition of El Greco came from the Spanish anarchists of the I.A.F., the Iberian Anarchist Federation. They are not exactly cultivated people, and when they saw El Greco’s works at Toledo for the first time, one of them shouted: “Long live the king of queers!” Evidently when a Spanish anarchist sees all those saints with mannered gestures, their eyes drawn out by ecstasy, he can’t help thinking of homosexuality. I bet that El Greco is the least Spanish painter of all: he came from Greece and he made do with his gift of mimesis. He had almost no personality, he was like the snails in Burgundy: they have no taste of their own, you have to fill them with spices. The snails of Burgundy absorb garlic, whereas El Greco absorbed local color and the mysticism around him. In Venice, he was a Venetian painter. Arriving in Toledo as a simple vehicle capable of absorbing anything, he became more Spanish than the Spanish, and more mystical than anyone. Only a theatre



buff could like him, and that's why Phillip II, who was no mean actor, liked him. The entire Escorial is nothing but a kind of gigantic theatrical production with Death as the main character. Phillip II surrounded him-self with all the great actors of the epoch, including, as I told you the other day, Hieronymus Bosch, with his whole array of phantasmagorias and phantoms. We mustn't forget that Phillip II ordered a procession in Toledo, something grotesque, sublime, ridiculous, and mystical at once; it must have been a hallucinating spectacle. Wagons drawn by mules carried organs down badly paved streets; an archbishop played religious music after first tying the tails of fifty cats to the keys inside the organ. Every time he struck a note, a horrible caterwauling poured out, followed by a yowling and a feline delirium frenzied enough to set the crowds a-tremble. I call that theatre intensified to the point of paroxysm. I hope to repeat that kind of spectacle and pile up athletes and dancers tied to organs by nylon strings and suspended several yards above the ground: I'll have all the desired melodies at the base of a musical instrument that will be extended by the choreographic effects of writhing bodies. At the same time, I'll add a beautiful ancient bathtub containing a live pig and covered with some transparent plastic material. Since the tub will be totally sealed off, everyone present will be able to witness the suffocation of the pig.

A. B.: How long will this charming torture last?

S. D.: I don't know yet. In any event, there'll be a microphone inside the tub to amplify the animal's agony and thereby terrorize everyone. This will not be a gratuitous act: I'll merely be reconstructing in a different form the delights I felt as a child when reading medieval mystics and Saint John of the Cross in my home in Figueras across from the slaughterhouse. The grunting of pigs and sows was the background music for my readings in mysticism. I'm faithful enough to my past to reconstruct strictly the very same atmosphere.

A. B.: Where will the ceremony take place?

S. D.: In an auditorium at the corner of Rue Pigalle and Rue Fontaine, the Bus Palladium. It will be a spectacle of pre-mysticism if not true mysticism.

A. B.: Let's get back to painters of the past and Velasquez.

S. D.: I repeat that I adore three old masters: Velasquez, Raphael, and Vermeer. Velasquez was the most disdainful and most sardonic person in the world, and a courtier of incredible dexterity. The king sent him to Italy, and when Velasquez returned, the king asked him what he thought of Raphael, the astounding reply was: "Non mi piace niente." Velasquez had discovered nothing of value in Raphael. He had been dazzled by Titian.

A. B.: What do you think of Ribera and Zurbarán?

S. D.: Together with Velasquez, they are the greatest Spanish painters. I fully agree with you on that score. I feel, as you do, that Goya is too much of a cartoonist, and that if caricature predominates in a work of art, it makes all the weaknesses more blatant. Today, Goya would be painting like Bernard Buffet.

A. B.: All the same, isn't there ultimately a kind of bitterness in Goya that rehabilitates him?

S. D.: Goya is dead, just as Bernard Buffet is dead. Yesterday a group of us were having lunch in a restaurant, and Bernard Buffet was sitting opposite us with some friends. There was nothing alive in him. Captain Moore was even foxy enough—it may never happen again—to improvise a little game: "Let's write an epitaph for Monsieur Bernard Buffet." One of us instantly offered the following pirouette: "Here lies cold Buffet." Since Mademoiselle Onda is not

one of us but since she alone could have delivered that necrological text to Bernard Buffet, we abstained from transmitting it to him.

- A. B.: Let's talk about Velasquez seriously.
- S. D.: The miraculous thing about Velasquez was his attachment to the Atlantic. His father was Portuguese, and along with his father's love for forests and moist places, Velasquez brought something that made up for the dryness in Spanish painting which was condemned to a surplus of rigor. The chief element in Velasquez is a blend of that maritime humidity and the disdainful melancholy of Spain. The imperial aspect and the fluid aspect were suddenly joined, forming a distant source of French Impressionism. Without Velasquez and the painters imitating him, and without the Prado museum, neither Monet nor Manet would have existed. The same phenomenon repeated itself: there would have been no cubism without Juan Gris and Picasso. Braque is never anything but a saccharine and Parisian version of the original cubism. Without *my* surrealism, Surrealism would never have been what it is. And in Spain, too, you'll find the beginnings of abstract art with a maximum of vehemence in the expression.
- A, B.: Let's slow down. You're in the Prado, in the room containing the most extraordinary paintings in the world: I mean the oval room that has Velasquez' masterpieces; to the left, through the main gallery, you'll find the most beautiful landscape ever painted (at least in my opinion): *View of Saragossa* by Velasquez and Mazo-Martinez; next, let your imagination take you to Vermeer's *View of Delft* in The Hague. Suppose you had to compare those two marvelous works of art. . .
- S.D.: Velasquez' canvas is no match for Vermeer's. The latter was haunted by a terrible exacerbation and anguish of perfecting and perfecting something that was already perfect. He painted and repainted over and over again, in order to correct the canvas to the utmost limit of his possibilities. He finally attained the miracle that hovers beyond words.
- A.B.: You were particularly inspired by Vermeer's *The Laceworker*. A propos, let's chat a bit more about Vermeer.
- S. D. I discovered that in *The Laceworker* as in all great paintings, the divine converges on something the artist did not paint visibly but contented himself with suggesting. In *The Laceworker* it's a needle stitching somewhere and yet unseen. Is it a phenomenon of cosmogony ? I know that the whole universe is gravitating around the indiscernible point of that needle, whose existence is certain but which was not meant for human eyes.
- A. B.: How about a word or two on the titans of tradition: Michelangelo, Tintoretto, and Rubens.
- S. D.: Except for Vermeer, Velasquez, and Raphael, they are all impotent.
- A. B.: That's not an answer.
- S. D.: You realize that we geniuses are all more or less impotent, starting with myself. Of all the impotent, Michelangelo was the most seriously afflicted. If he were living today, he'd be a radical-socialist painter.
- A. B.: Your answers don't satisfy me. Let's go on to Raphael. There was a time, a dozen years back, when you gave Raphael an A for technical know-how. Evidently, you'd give yourself A plus.
- S. D.: Yes, it's fun handing out marks to painters as if they were naughty little pupils. As you know, I hand out different report cards from week to week, and sometimes I flunk Raphael.
- A. B.: Nevertheless, Raphael's classical manner has earned your deep respect.

- S. D.: It's mainly his conventional side, his academicism, and his almost total lack of originality. I'm of the same opinion as the great essayist Eugenio d'Ors, who said, "Anything that's not original is plagiarism." Raphael meticulously copied what his master, Perugino, had created before him. Raphael's exact copies are exactly like the originals except for some minor nuances. In *The Marriage of the Virgin*, inspired by Perugino, Raphael merely left out three steps in an architectural motif and lightly bowed the head of one of the figures. This careful copy, with its minimal changes, allowed him to devise a certain melancholy and to invest certain of his canvases with a radiant tone. He thus managed to join the eternal. It's better to copy and to retouch slightly than to transform thoroughly. Those who advocate a total revolution, as my compatriot, the ingenious Señor Picasso, does, are merely dreadful cuckolds. Like him, they want to detonate everything, they pulverize tradition, wipe out perspective, and wind up unfaithful to themselves. Picasso, instead of devoting himself to the plagiarism of the classics, which might have led him to being himself, commits a series of successive and contradictory plagiarisms: after imitating Toulouse-Lautrec, he wreaked vengeance on him by imitating Van Gogh, whom he soon abandoned. Next, he started doing Surrealism. Consider the predecessors of Vermeer, for example Pieter de Hooch, whose paintings are quite similar to those of the Master of Delft. We can see the same house, the same hands, and we can conclude that Vermeer contented himself with following a tradition. He simply added a detail, a refinement, something imperceptible here and there so that the tradition, although scrupulously followed, turned into an unprecedented originality.
- A. B.: What do you think of Rubens, particularly his drawings?
- S. D.: He's obviously in the category of the great masters. He influenced Velasquez who frequently spoke of him and who was impressed by the freshness of his coloring.
- A. B.: Shall we stop in the middle of the seventeenth century?
- S. D.: I'd like to emphasize once more that tradition brings something original, but we mustn't forget that it also drags along a lot of dust. The penalty for taking over habits is to find oneself a prisoner of false academicism and ossified values. At that point, it's healthier to revolt just as it's healthier to kick traditions in the behind simply to shake a bit of the dust off. When everything's wiped clean, you'll realize that the revolt was valuable only in so far as it rejuvenated the tradition.
- A. B.: What is your opinion of Georges de La Tour, who, for my money, is one of the greatest painters in French history?
- S. D.: You mean the one who painted candles? I really prefer Claude Lorrain.
- A. B.: Well, I find Claude Lorrain cold and academic.
- S. D.: Claude Lorrain was the first to defend himself against the pernicious invasion of light into French art. Light came more and more to replace the picture and the drawing until finally, in the era of Impressionism, it killed everything else. Georges de La Tour's painting, with its tiny flames, is nothing but mannerism, picturesque stuff, and unimportant art.
- A. B.: Fine. Let's go right back to the nineteenth century and discuss your unbearable Meissonier.
- S. D.: Meissonier was the first artist to introduce the notion of separate particles into the treatment of a genre scene or a landscape.
- A. B.: In what way?
- S. D.: The general effect of any of his canvases squares with the latest discoveries of

modern physics. Contrary to Einstein and long before him, Meissonier realized that neither time nor space exists as an independent notion. The important thing for him was to place a detail in space: he is the creator of *placements in space*. In his canvases, the figures gaze at one another, like the famous standing hussar, at the same distance as a painter doing his portrait, whereas the onlookers gaze in a different way. The intensity of all this staring produces an unforgettable impression of a mathematical scheme; an incredible constellation with a seemingly simple harmony arises between the sparkling points on the pupils or on the tips of noses, in the most finicky paintings ever done. Furthermore, Meissonier never scrupled to place an emphasis by adding, with the help of his brush, a bright dot. This method of stressing particles—atoms!—in a canvas derives from the same violence that erupts when our friend Mathieu covers huge surface areas in his way, that is, with spontaneous graphisms. During the same era, all the blockheads were talking about Cézanne, pretending that he was merely a hodgepodge of smut and faults: miles and miles of painting and painting, on which basis people speculated because of the blunders the gentleman committed. I, however, maintain that the virtuosity achieved by Meissonier is far more heroic and more perfect. Meissonier was born in Lyon, and he had that love for paroxysmal things and panache, which was characteristic of the poets of Lyon many centuries earlier. Meissonier is even more skillful than Vermeer. The subject matter of his paintings, appearances notwithstanding, is the most mysterious that you'll ever see. This is another proof that he's a Lyonese of sound stock. I predict that in five years there'll be a terrific revolution in taste, and people will once more be adoring Meissonier.

A. B.: You've already been talking about him for fifteen years.

S. D.: I won't stop now! I predicted the event, and people are starting to follow me. Recently a young Pop artist standing before a Cézanne painting, said to me: "All this leaves me cold." So I took him to a little canvas of Meissonier's, and I asked him whether it, too, bored him. The canvas contained military buttons, and a thousand little things such as one sees in everyday life, without anything personal at first glance, without even a subjective rendering. Meissonier never had to deform, or make visual reality suffer, which, incidentally is incompatible with any masterpiece. My young Pop Art friend instantly felt an agitation that was much greater than that he had felt at the bad math lesson offered by Cézanne, Meissonier had managed to remain within an unchangeable line, like that of the *Hermes* of Praxiteles, in which the anatomy retains all its dimensions and all its balance. This ancient work is already true photography just like Vermeer's. Meissonier has a further dimension: his genuine photography refuses to make abstractions in poor taste. He never arrogates the right to create art and add a soul where none is necessary; Meissonier effaces himself totally before what he feels he has to paint. Nothing is left but a kind of total idiocy, without the intervention or the treason of the subconscious. Meissonier is content with the object painted and the hand guiding the brush. By this natural process, he manages to convey the feeling that any simple object, can, with the hand as a go-between, become something finespun and subtle, even a digestive tract, ergo a moving image. Now certain rather unspeakable betrayals do exist, and the less intelligent the painter (Meissonier is a case in point), the more a psychiatrist or psychoanalyst will unearth unintentional treasures. For my money, Meissonier is *the* great genius and the great brewer of mysteries in French painting—as opposed to

Cézanne, who was merely a poor but honest painter, whose efforts were enormous and overly cerebral. You know that marvelous anecdote: Cézanne's mother has just died; he dashes off to a provincial painter whom he holds in great esteem and asks him to do a portrait of the deceased. When the other points out that he himself is a painter of no mean reputation, Cézanne exclaims: "But I don't know how to draw." Little Cézanne was quite aware that he wouldn't know how to reproduce his mother's features. So what are we to think of this man who spent all his life trying to paint concave apples, and who never got beyond convex ones? Just imagine, apples painted inside out; isn't that exciting? There is something perverse about being content to paint apples *manqués*, apples that are awkward and always much too ugly.

- A. B.: After all this fanfare in honor of Meissonier, let's pause as a regiment does. Tomorrow we'll talk about the Impressionists and the moderns.
- S. D.: Fine.

## FIFTH, SIXTH, AND SEVENTH CONVERSATIONS 100 QUESTIONS FOR SALVADOR DALI

**S**ame setting. Almost constant presence of Miodrag Bulatovic. Novelist Boris Schreiber drops in. So does Pierre Argillet, one of the painter's chief editors. Dali is wearing a suit that the tailor has not yet finished; its incomplete form is ringed by a whole network of white threads. He looks as if he had just stepped out of a *bodygraph* ad. The tailor, taking measurements from time to time and making him bend his elbow or his knee, has affixed an excrescence on the left shoulder; Dali cannot help calling this outgrowth on the navy blue cloth magical. The hubbub is indescribable; at times, some thirty persons are terrorized by one another, admiring the ocelot, but disinclined to go near it. Captain Peter Moore, getting rid of indiscreet visitors, whispers to them politely but slyly: "Dali's better than a movie, isn't he?" During an interruption Pierre Argillet says to Alain Bosquet: "Do you know why Dali is against capital punishment? He told me the other day. He's actually a partisan of torture, a very long and drawn out torture."

One of the interviews takes place very early in the morning; very early for Dali, that is: at 11:40 A.M. His trousers carelessly undone, he is kneeling before the etchings that Argillet brings him. In thirty-five minutes, he signs 300 of them, breaking five pencils. The conversation takes place on the carpet, the two interlocutors assuming a horizontal position. Strangely enough, this posture gives Dali an almost elegiac intonation and a sort of niceness that mitigates his usual explosiveness.

ALAIN BOSQUET: I've jotted down a few jabs, for you to answer off the cuff.

SALVADOR DALI: Marvelous, I love machine guns.

A. B.: When are you going to die?

S. D.: Uhh.... ! Never!

A. B.: If Dali is resurrected, in what form will he reappear?

S. D.: As Pollux, complementing Castor, and under the sign of the Dioscuri.

A. B.: If the city of Paris puts up a statue of you, where should it stand, and what should it look like?

S. D.: At the very same spot in Trocadero where there used to be an effigy of a bronze rhinoceros. I want my statue to be a cosmic rhinoceros, and his behind should contain, not the usual granulations, but a sunflower divided in two with a small cauliflower inside.

A. B.: What do you do with all your money?

S. D.: I am a terrible miser. When I have a lot of money, I like to get more, and then more, and more and more. But, to the dumbfoundment of all, I'm establishing a \$10,000 annual prize this year for any scientist in any country who makes strides in the problem of hibernation. In the end, I'll profit from it myself.

A. B.: You're softening, Dali.

S. D.: In what way?

A. B.: I just said it to provoke you a little.

S. D.: The money I'll distribute will permit me to cuckold the greatest scientific geniuses alive, for they'll be merely working for me and my survival.

A. B.: If you had to incinerate all your paintings but one, which would it be?

S. D.: None. Only a bomb could destroy my canvases. Let me tell you an anecdote.

Once, somebody asked Jean Cocteau what he would rescue if the Prado were on fire. I knew perfectly well what he was going to answer, because he had



already said so a number of times before. In fact, he had borrowed his reply from a Greek author. To wit: "If the Prado were burning, I would rescue the fire." Cocteau glanced at me with a malicious gleam in his eye as if to say: "Can Dali think up a more original answer?" His mind seemed completely set at ease. Next, they asked Dali, who replied with his usual one-upmanship: "I wouldn't rescue the fire, I'd rescue the air." I consider the element of air the most original in painting, especially in Velasquez' *Meninas*. We'd have to rescue the air, and not the fire.

A. B.: If you met Jesus Christ, what would you tell him?

S. D.: Nothing, after all I don't know him. I would probably say hello to him. My attitude would be the same as Voltaire's. Whenever he passed a monstrosity he would doff his hat. One day, an astonished friend cried out: "I thought you were an atheist." Voltaire rejoined: "Listen, God and I are not on speaking terms, but we do greet one another on the street."

A. B.: If you met Pope Paul VI in a Turkish bath, what would you say to him?

S. D.: Oh, he *does* have a certain tendency to move around a good deal, but I'm one hundred percent certain that I'll never run into him in an establishment of that sort. I therefore consider your question invalid.

A. B.: If you were not a human being, what animal would you like to be?

S. D.: Always the same, a rhinoceros, because the rhinoceros is the only animal that carries an incredible sum of cosmic knowledge inside its armor.

A. B.: Have you ever felt anything like scorn?

S. D.: I feel no scorn for anybody. Any human being, even the most repulsive, can suddenly acquire an archangelical voice. Or else, deep in his eyes, you'll discover a marvelous color, and so on .... Every human being is worthy of my utmost respect. And if I find that this person is really useless for Dali's cosmogony, I shall feel that the fault lies with me, my knowledge, or my paranoid activity.

A. B.: My! You're really humble! How terrible!

S. D.: I've always said I was: I am at two antipodes of myself: alternately humble and convinced of my regal superiority.

A. B.: Would you like to eat human flesh?

S. D.: Morally, yes, because this is the most tender of feelings. Cannibalism has even become holy; after all, Catholics eat the Lord in the form of a Eucharistic Host.

A. B.: If you were the father of fourteen children, would you commit suicide?

S. D.: Never, even if I were the father of forty children.

A. B.: If you were condemned to death but allowed to pick the means of execution yourself, which would you choose?

S. D.: The one involving the greatest amount of exhibitionism and allowing me to show myself off all the way through; the one involving speeches, harangues, in short, one that would let me use the event to my advantage.

A. B.: If all mankind were to disappear within a hour and you had the right to rescue one single painting, not by you, which would you select?

S. D.: *The Artist's Studio* by Vermeer, in Vienna.

A. B.: Do you invent what you invent in your brain or in your mouth?

S. D.: All my experiences are visceral. Teilhard de Chardin was of the same mind: everything begins in the mouth and then goes elsewhere in the body, with the nerves. Man's first philosophical instrument par excellence is his awareness of the real by his jaws.

A. B.: With what famous woman would you like to spend the night?

- S. D.: None. I've often been asked that. I am one hundred percent faithful to Gala. As for my little afternoon masturbations, well ... they're to satisfy the voyeur in me, and no one would ever dare touch me.
- A. B.: With what famous man would you like to spend the night?
- S. D.: Unfortunately, he's dead. Max Planck.
- A. B.: That's an odd choice.
- S. D.: He discovered the black body in physics?
- A. B.: The *quantum* man?
- S. D.: That's right.
- A. B.: If you could only rescue one book, which would it be?
- S. D.: Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus*, without the least hesitation.
- A. B.: You place him even above Cervantes?
- S. D.: Far, far above Cervantes. In *Locus Solus*, I find the theory of anti-gravitation and hibernation, the only two possibilities of survival granted to a human being.
- A. B.: What will you do in hell?
- S. D.: I'll devote myself to the whole libidinous side of myself, which I couldn't concentrate on in this earthly world. Saint John of the Cross said that hell is a sort of paradise devoid of fire, as in Epinal's illustrations. Hell is a state of perpetual fun; morals do not exist there. The possibilities of fornication between brothers and sisters are boundless. Sodomy is exquisite. It's the absolute rule of the Marquis de Sade.
- A. B.: If you were obliged to worship an everyday object as a relic, what would it be.
- S. D.: A pair of shoes.
- A. B.: Would you be capable of living anonymously?
- S. D.: It would be horribly difficult. And Dali would not remain anonymous for long.
- A. B.: How do you imagine eternity to be?
- S. D.: One of the minor events that made the deepest impression on me in my life, was a toothache that my father had at regular intervals. The pain was so great that even after all his hair had turned white he would still weep bitterly. One day he smashed his fist upon the table and cried out: "I'm capable of resisting my toothache for all eternity, as long as I never die!" You can imagine what sort of an impression that made on me: someone consenting to live through all eternity with a toothache.
- A. B.: When was the last time you cried?
- S. D.: Way, way back. I had deposited some cash to buy a property only to be told that the property had already been sold.
- A. B.: If you were condemned to perpetual incarceration within a totally dark cell, what would you do?
- S. D.: I would create phosphenes. I would exert pressure on my eyes with my fingers to make an image emerge from my intra-retina. It's something I never have time for in my current life.
- A. B.: Would you prefer the throne of Spain, France, or the Holy Roman Empire?
- S. D.: Personally, I don't care to mount any throne whatsoever. I'm a congenital traitor, I was born in a tiny provincial town into a bourgeois family, and I boot-laced myself up into the aristocracy. I'm just good enough to be the courtier for any throne to come along, but I would refuse to mount that throne. I regard a crown as bequeathed by divine right, and I simply don't have the right to wear one.
- A. B.: If you were king of Spain and an absolute monarch, what would be your first law?
- S. D.: I've just told you that I wouldn't accept any throne.



- A. B.: Suppose you were enthroned by force?
- S. D.: In that case, I would first abolish capital punishment.
- A. B.: You're getting moral. How disgusting.
- A. B.: Whom would you like to kill?
- S. D.: No one.
- A. B.: If you were given a solid gold bidet, what would you do with it?
- S. D.: I would have a phrase of Lenin's engraved upon it: "The day we come to power, I hope we'll be able to construct golden pissoirs." I've already quoted this statement and scandalized quite a lot of journalists. One of them even cried out: "That's a deliberate eccentricity, a purely Dalian lucubration!" However, a few days later, current politics proved me right. Khrushchev was in Paris, and he went to Place Denfert-Rochereau to see Lenin's old apartment: "I hope that, as our great comrade Lenin said, the day will come when we can build solid gold pissoirs." For my money, it would be an act of magic, and even an apotheosis of medieval enchantment, because in the Middle Ages they claimed they could convert ammonia into gold.
- A. B.: Can we go along through life appearing to make fun of everything?
- S. D.: That's what I do! And that's what most successful dandies do.
- A. B.: Suppose Dali became a monk, what order would he join?
- S. D.: I would have to be a Carmelite.
- A. B.: If you were forced to sign the name of Picasso to all your own paintings for a period of twenty years, how would you react?
- S. D.: It would be yet another superb Dalian performance ....
- A. B.: Wouldn't you like to be a bum for a year?
- S. D.: No. But I once had the pleasure of seeing that sort of craving develop in the brain of my friend Luis Buñuel. Once, in Madrid, he dressed up (or down) in the most truculent rags of a bum, and started panhandling his friends. He was unrecognizable, and no one suspected anything. It was marvelous. Luis Buñuel stepped into the literary café; he was covered with excrement and gave off such an awful stink that his best friends kicked him and drove him away, with a downright Spanish roughness. Yet upon their last previous meeting, when he was dressed like everyone else, he had heard these very same men express ideas that were humanitarian and noble, bourgeois and hypocritical. At any rate, those people who come running after me are glad to disguise themselves. I only have to encourage them.
- A. B.: What would Dali paint if he were a Buddhist?
- S. D.: One of the central ideas of Buddha and Euclid, namely that perfection and Nirvana are shaped like an egg. I would paint eggs.
- A. B.: What would a Stalinist Dali paint?
- S. D.: He'd simply paint the god Vulcan, the one who forged weapons and cast Achilles' shield. The myth of Vulcan is incarnated in the modern world by Stalin: It was he who cast the shield that will defend us against China.
- A. B.: If only one poem could remain on earth, which would you choose?
- S. D.: I think I'll have to pause for a moment. The rules of our game dictate that I answer in rapid fire. And I feel that neither Lorca, nor Eluard nor anyone else has written poems that really satisfy me. Oh, wait, I've got *Love and Memory* by Salvador Dali.
- A. B.: Do you intend to rewrite the Bible?
- S. D.: No, because people rewrite it constantly. I might add that in any cosmogony, we'll always find the same theme. I've just gotten hold of an essay which proves Dante was satisfied to transcribe the *Thousand and One Nights* in his *Divine*

*Comedy.* A present-day method of writing consists in choosing books at random and then rewriting them simply by changing a few words. The most glorious antecedent of this method was mine. When Christian Zervos once asked me to do an article on Picasso, I promised him I'd write one, but then I was at a loss at how to go about it and so I kept him waiting. I came across a work of Sacher-Masoch's in my library: *Sappho's Slippers*. All I did was skim through the first chapter and replace Sappho's name with Picasso's. Afterward I sent Zervos my little hoax, he called me up and said: "All your friends simply praised Picasso, but you're the only one who's said anything new, accurate, and substantial." That was how *Sappho's Slippers* became *Picasso's Slippers*. I'm very proud of it because I'm the only person ever to cuckold Christian Zervos. Frankly, I think he's the most cuckoldable creature in modern art.

A. B.: If Sophia Loren came in here naked, what would be the first thing you'd do?

S. D.: I'd say hello.

A. B.: If you were not allowed to have your moustache, would you suffer?

S. D.: Not at all, for Dali loves the inquisition, more than anything in the world, even if it's directed against Dali, and especially if it's directed against Dali! What bothers me most down here is liberty! At a very young age I discovered myself completely anxiety-ridden whenever I had a choice to make: I never knew whether I ought to write a poem, paint a picture, or what sort of picture to paint; I didn't know whether I ought to go to the movies or somewhere else. It was both extraordinary and awful. Suddenly, General Primo de Rivera threw me into prison because of my political activities—in reality because of my father's views. In my cell, I learned to enjoy life in an exceptional way. There was no question about choosing the movies over anything else. I was forced to hunch up over my own fate. I recall that they brought me small sardines in cans; my enjoyment was sublime: a little more oil, a little more bread, and always the same sardines that I would have spit out if I hadn't been in prison. The inquisition always forces those people with a very strong moral makeup to get the most out of their sensations and their ideas. The inquisition is beyond all question a boon. There was a time when it refused to allow painters to depict the genitals. As a result, painters, faced with this ban, depicted all sorts of decorations all over the canvas to conceal genitals, which invaded everything else. A Jesuitic person like myself blossoms only under inquisitional measures: he is forced to prevent himself from giving into easy activities, and he forces himself into the most beneficial labyrinth in existence. If you ordered Dali not to have a moustache in the usual place, he'd contrive to have moustaches coming out all over, through the ass hole, the ears, and it would be the magnificent apotheosis of the hypocritical moustache.

A. B.: If a billionaire asked you not to paint for a year, how much money would he have to pay you?

S. D.: Oh, not much! A few million.

A. B.: A few million what?

S. D.: Dollars, of course. Let's be practical. Give me three million dollars a year and I won't touch a brush.

A. B.: I recall your reflection of the fifties. You said to me: "When I was a child, I made up my mind to travel through life approximately as a multimillionaire."

S. D.: Yes, I learned my lesson very early. I had heard that Cervantes, the greatest glory of Spain, had ended his life in a prison. I also found out at school that Christopher Columbus, who had after all given us a whole continent, returned to Spain only to be thrown into a debtor's prison. So, haunted by these memo-

ries of two illustrious experiences, I decided to take indispensable precautions as soon as possible: to become famous, I had to spend a term in jail, and to get out, I had to accumulate a few million. Once these two things were accomplished, life would be possible.

A. B.: Could you live in Communist China?

S. D.: With the greatest pleasure. But I should still like the Russians to prepare a nice and effective defense against China. This in no way prevents me from wanting to go to Peking: I believe those people are very easy to corrupt because of their atavistic refinement. Besides, since Mao Tse-tung is a supremely cultured person, it would be my task to make him a wee bit surrealist. Oh what vertigo would be mine!

A. B.: Could you spend twenty years in England?

S. D.: I can live anywhere, even in England, which is the most unpleasant place that I know.

A. B.: What do you think of dragonflies?

S. D.: Due to my friend Doctor Pages, I am basically in favor of dragonflies. These little beasties have true symptoms of anti-gravitation. And the same holds for flies. Dragonflies are the machines of the future.

A. B.: Are you capable of accepting an object without metamorphosing it?

S. D.: Impossible! I can't do away with my need to study the magical possibilities of an object. A friend of mine has just presented me with an immense sideboard that reaches to the ceiling. Before definitely accepting it, I am going to study its history, because from the viewpoint of magic it might contain baleful influences.

A. B.: Why won't you bury the hatchet with André Breton?

S. D.: Because he won't make peace with me! You know I'll kiss and make up with everybody, and I'd be delighted to see him again. The same holds true for Picasso: I'd love to see him as soon as possible. They're the ones who don't want to see me.

A. B.: Are you more of a masochist than a sadist?

S. D.: I'm sadomasochistic, like all people.

A. B.: Half-and-half?

S. D.: There's no such thing as half-and-half. There are varying doses of sadism and masochism. After Dali, there'll be a combination of the two, a balance of the two paroxysms.

A. B.: If they issued a postage stamp with Dali's picture on it, which pose would you choose?

S. D.: I'd like to be shown in profile.

A. B.: Have you ever been generous?

S. D.: Very little, very rarely, and each time I was, the results were catastrophic. Once, someone came to me telling me about all the kids he had to feed and similar sob stories. So I said: "Why do you ask me for charity? I'm methodically preparing a catastrophe that will engulf all humanity, including you and me."

A. B.: Are you afraid that young people might make fun of you?

S. D.: On the contrary, I wish they would. It would simply prove that I dominate them.

A. B.: Why don't you make any new films?

S. D.: I haven't as yet found a producer or a director for the movies that I make nonstop and that I'm soon going to be screening. With what I have, and after a few major cuts, the film will last about twenty-five hours. I've got very copious material; it will take me quite a while to cut and edit it.

A. B.: Is art replacing the orgasm?

- S. D.: Impossible. On the other hand, mysticism might be able to do it.
- A. B.: Why aren't you publishing any poetry at the present?
- S. D.: I'm in the midst of writing an erotic tragedy which even Jean-Jacques Pauvert considers unpublishable during a democratic regime. I'll have to find a totalitarian regime which I'll corrupt. Or else an absolute monarchy in the style of the court of Phillip II, one that will stage my work in complete privacy. Democracy and UNESCO are contrary to any thinking that's sexually obsessed.
- A. B.: Of all the words in the Spanish language, which is most dear to you?
- S. D.: *Espana*, Spain, which etymologically means "thorn," a word opposed to everything that France represents, France, which has the habit of cultivating its gardens cerebrally, as if they were beds of roses, with the gloves of elegance, and so on .... The Spanish thorn is more natural, aggressive, and impossible to touch.
- A. B.: Which word in the French language is the most astonishing for you?
- S. D.: *Parme, violettes de Parme*.
- A. B.: Why?
- S. D.: I'm always astounded. Is it the meaning or the music? I don't know.
- A. B.: Where is the border between genius and madness?
- S. D.: This great problem has never been solved. The most celebrated psychopathologists don't know where madness begins and genius ends. My own case is even more difficult. I'm not only an *agent provocateur*, I'm also an *agent simulateur*. I never know when I start simulating, and when I'm telling the truth. This is characteristic of my deep essence. It often happens that I say something, fully convinced of its importance and seriousness; a year later, I realize how childish the thing is and how uninteresting to the point of being lamentable. On the other hand, I may say something with a laugh, just to appear smart or to astound someone, but as time passes I become convinced that I've come out with something very fine and very important. These alternations ultimately confuse me, but I always manage to extricate myself. But whatever happens, my audience mustn't know whether I'm spoofing or being serious; and likewise, I mustn't know either, I'm in a constant interrogation: where does the deep and philosophically valid Dali begin, and where does the looney and preposterous Dali end?
- A. B.: But aren't you afraid that madness and genius may overlap? In other words, aren't you scared that eventually genius may do without madness and become very simple? And, vice versa, what would you do if madness ultimately devoured genius?
- S. D.: I'd *like* it to devour the other.
- A. B.: Don't confuse us. Which?
- S. D.: As in Heraclitus, we ought to attain a harmony of opposites, genius has to pass over madness, and madness over genius: the two of them are viscous and cosmic languages thanks to which the *Divine little Dali* will remain below them, divided by two strata of personality that are paradoxical and contradictory.
- A. B.: You seem quite reasonable, today! Which is to say that you don't seem overly argumentative in the French sense of *raisonneur*. Is it due to our horizontal position on the carpet and the etchings you signed a while back?
- S. D.: It cannot be denied that a horizontal position diminishes the genius and the mysticism of the Spaniard that I am. For, as you know, the Spanish invented the only two mechanisms that count for the *verticality* of our era: the submarine—which is the dress of the subconscious—and the autogyro, the ancestor of the

helicopter. In Spain, our great honor consists in knowing that everything is vertical, even ... associations, which are vertical and hierarchical. Thus, it is obvious that since I'm reclining like a figure in Ingres or David, I am without my aggressive verticality. But all the same I do gain something: a sort of nuance that can make the audience swallow the truculences I utter on other days while in my normal posture. Horizontally, I never neglect the artful dodges of diplomacy.

A. B.: Why do you care more for your enemies than your friends?

S. D.: I am following a teaching of Montaigne's. In an enemy, one finds a stimulus and a lesson. On the other hand, people who resemble you have absolutely nothing to offer you.

A. B.: Have you ever felt shame?

S. D.: Very much so. As a child I was shy, especially with society people who belonged to a higher class than mine. I always blushed terribly whenever I doffed my hat. During my first visits to Marie-Laure de Noailles, I was completely anxiety-ridden about making a faux pas. Now, the reverse is true: it's I who intimidate others.

A. B.: Doesn't living in posh hotels kill your genuineness?

S. D.: Quite the contrary! In a sumptuous hotel, all of the outer life vanishes: you only have to press on a button and the door opens, if you need anything it's brought to you. Everything's organized splendidly. You can call up for theatre tickets just like that. Everything runs smoothly, everything is resolved perfectly. Under such conditions, madness has the greatest chance to be manifest in its pure state.

A. .: What is your favorite color and why?

S. D.: Naples yellow, because it's the color of proteins as well as the dominant color in certain chemical mixtures of cardinal importance for painting. After Naples yellow, I'm most strongly drawn to the color of oxygen, that is to say blue. In Vermeer, those are the two colors one finds most permanently.

A. B.: You greatly disappointed me, sensuously speaking, when you said you'd merely say hello to Sophia Loren if she came wandering in here naked. I noted the whim, but not without embarrassment: at the core of this sexuality which you never stop talking about and which is an area where you excel, there are moments of great coldness. I say this to you because of my next question: Would you like to spank Brigitte Bardot?

S. D.: No! I have absolutely no sadistic impulses. For everything concerning the erotic, I would rather that specialists take over: they can spank her and what not .... I'm a first-rate voyeur, and I should enjoy the spectacle.

A. B.: Why aren't you a specialist yourself?

S. D.: I'm a neo-Platonist. In the district I hail from, between Figueras and Toulouse, the people have always practiced courtly love. This doesn't mean that we don't want to incite others to more direct acts. I love to arouse passion between men and women. I love watching a mass of lesbians evolve: I once saw 500 at one time at a cocktail party in New York. It was sublime! The other day, I was introduced to ten, each of whom came to bring me a rose. Those lesbians took over my mind, I put them wherever I like, I feel them against one another. But I, personally, never touch anybody, that's become proverbial. It's probably due to inhibitions that I received in earliest childhood. My father spoke at length about venereal diseases, and I was terror-stricken. Whenever I went to brothel after coming to Paris, I always kept a distance of two yards between myself and the prostitute. I thought you could get the clap through the air. Perhaps you'll

understand why touching anyone gives me the shivers. Seeing someone is another matter: the day before yesterday I saw a remarkable film in which a huge dog was making love with a young Spanish girl: it was as marvelous as a painting of Dali's.

A. B.: How long did it take you to paint *The Last Supper*, the one in Washington?

S. D.: Two and a half or three months.

A. B.: Were there a lot of preliminary drawings?

S. D.: There were photographs. I almost always use photographic documents. It's traditional. Praxiteles made direct casts of legs, arms, and anything that he was going to reproduce. For someone who draws as I do, a photograph is an extremely useful element.

A. B.: What would you advise President Johnson?

S. D.: I never try to answer a political question, I'd be merely lying if I did.

A. B.: Well, then go ahead and lie.

S. D.: In that case, I would advise him to recognize Communist China immediately. You simply cannot deny the existence of that enormous country.

A. B.: What sort of joke would you play on Mao Tse-tung?

S. D.: We touched on it the other day. Mao Tse-tung is a man of rare subtlety, and he'd understand the joke perfectly because he bathes in the most exceptional essences. He would understand that Genghis Khan, art, the canons of the classical Chinese poem belong to the domain of the past. I would drive the reading of his poems to the point of caricature before hysterical young people who dance be-bop and other dislocations of the hip. If Mao Tse-tung came to this mystical and grotesque manifestation, he would realize that my lyrical adaptation is first-rate.

A. B.: Do you ever experience genuine paralyzing boredom?

S. D.: Boredom is tetanus.

A. B.: I mean metaphysical boredom: not knowing what to do.

S. D.: Naturally, Pascal's existential *angst*, which consists in feeling tiny before the infinite universe, this kind of anguish diminishes progressively, as demonstrated by Teilhard de Chardin and other scientists. I find it reassuring to persuade myself that the universe is shrinking, and that the railroad station at Perpignan, that constant image I bear within, constitutes the main convergence. Pascal's *angst* before the infinite plagues me less and less, except when I'm asleep .... because I so frequently change hotels. But it goes no further than my wondering in the middle of the night: "Am I in Cadaqueuz, in New York, or at the Hôtel Meurice?" The torture only lasts a quarter of a second, a quarter-second of cosmic *angst* and no more. It's a commonplace thing, it probably happens to you, too.

A. B.: When was the last time that you were dead drunk?

S. D.: A long time ago, about thirty years back. I was at a grand dinner of the Spanish militia with some revolutionaries. I had drunk a bit during the day. They took the cover off the paella and the steam that escaped was so thick that I fell into a dead faint and came to on the floor. By a quirk of fate, there was someone beneath the table already, a priest. They brought me to my hotel and asked me what I had drunk during the day. When I told them I had had five martinis and some champagne, they concluded that I had passed out because of the drinks. Ever since, I only drink mineral water. My friends know that I live on Eau de Vittel.

A. B.: If they lent you the Eiffel Tower, what would you do with it?

S. D.: Don't let anyone touch the Eiffel Tower, it's perfect the way it is. The revolving



beacons on top can create shadows inside the apartments facing the Tower. I've been inside four of these places: the shadows are extraordinary, they transform everything into a superb and stunning gelatine, or if you prefer, into braised tripes and onions.

A. B.: If you were allowed to destroy the entire works of three contemporary painters, irrevocably, which would you choose?

S. D.: First of all, the works of Turner, whom I consider the worst painter in the world. Then, the paintings of Paul Cézanne. Thirdly, the false paintings of Ingres, which were done by a Russian, and which are all prototypes of three-dimensional stupidity.

A. B.: I meant contemporaries, the most modern painters.

S. D.: Well, then Gauguin. He's as bad as Turner.

A. B.: Do you believe in the devil?

S. D.: Neither in the devil nor in hell. They're Hebrew inventions for maintaining morals in human beings, so that they won't let themselves go.

A. B.: Who's got the most beautiful breasts in the world?

S. D.: The Marie-Antoinette Museum: the subject in biscuit molded in the shape of a cup. The Fontainebleau School of course. The breast is shaped almost like a lemon.

A. B.: Was Pope John XXIII an imbecile?

S. D.: Not at all. There are two kinds of pope: the respiratory ones and the digestive ones. I had the honor of being received by Pacelli who was the very prototype of the respiratory pope: a slender man, almost ivory, a man with an imagination. Personally, I really prefer the digestive popes like John XXIII. There was something so esculent about him! He was a good shepherd, and in an era like ours, in which people travel about a good deal, the pope really has to be a good pastor. In the congested world of today with all its taxis, as in Paris, a good shepherd is doing a good job. Like a cop, he tells you to go left when necessary in order to avoid a bottleneck. The present pope is a respiratory one: he breathes so much that he needs a lot of space to walk around in. I don't find this the least bit comforting. The pope should remain seated.

A. B.: You don't care for flying popes?

S. D.: Not at all; I personally could never urge a pope strongly enough to remain in the Vatican.

A. B.: Who is the most inept politician today?

S. D.: There are so many! An embarrassment of riches! I think the perfect imbecile is the man who succeeded Togliatti as head of the Communist movement in Italy. Italian Communism had an un hoped-for opportunity, and now everything's been compromised by that dwarf. If Italy were ripe for Communism, and the Communists had taken over, we would have had a marvelous war: a war that would have lasted for two weeks to be followed by a physical mutation of humanity. We would have seen the appearance of angels, and the unbearable mass of tourists that spoil our planet would have vanished from sight. We would witness a new upsurge of Homeric jokes. Honestly, wars have never hurt anybody except the people who die and instantly turn into angels; that's the most radical way of doing them a favor. But now the chances for war are lessening constantly, because all heads of state, including the Pope, want peace. Fortunately, the Chinese.

A. B.: Who is the most inept of famous painters today?

S. D.: Marc Chagall.

A. B.: I'm glad to hear you say that, because I feel the same way. Are you preparing for

your posterity?

S. D.: Very much so. I cannot stress too often the hopes I am placing in hibernation. I have great confidence that the scientists of all countries, including Yugoslavia and Spain, will be making substantial contributions, both practically and theoretically, to the phenomenon of freezing, which is to say, survival.

A. B.: When will the end of the world come?

S. D.: I don't believe that a nuclear war will bring about the end of the world. All the bombs we have will not be sufficient. The apocalyptic idea derives more naturally from geology. It will not be a man-made catastrophe. The notion of the end of the world has never frightened me. If the world were to die, even this afternoon, I should endorse it gladly. But if one single person were to survive, there could be no possible doubt as to its being Dali. I shall be the last.

A. B.: Would you like to be the first man on Mars?

S. D.: I haven't the slightest curiosity about other planets. I'm not even curious about other cities. I'm quite content with Paris and Venice. There's no objection to others' going wherever they like, even in my place. As with erotic themes, I'm just a voyeur. And I'm a voyeur of cosmonauts, too. I don't like traveling. I'll never get to Mexico. The President of Mexico once invited me to come and visit him in his capital; I don't like the poetry of places. It interferes terribly with my habits, and all it does is slow down my cerebral activity.

A. B.: Which French church do you like the most?

S. D.: The Cathedral of Toulouse on the road to Saint-Jacques de Compostelle.

A. B.: Do you mean Saint-Sernin?

S. D.: That's right.

A. B.: What do you think of Charlie Chaplin?

S. D.: He's a true genius. It worked against him however when he became aware of his role and read all the stupid things written about him. He turned into an unbearable intellectual. The movies I like best are the shorts he did at the beginning, with those quasi-mechanical monsters.

A. B.: Let me ask you a question that's very important to people of my age. Do the concepts of the absurd and disgust appear valid to you?

S. D.: Lautréamont was of the opinion that nothing on earth is comprehensible. Absurdity and disgust are simply pimientos, condiments that provoke men and urge them on to a wider choice. The result is a wider knowledge of things, or at least the illusion that this knowledge is deepening. If you take a close look, however, absurdity doesn't exist.

A. B.: And you don't think that an entire generation was able to sustain itself precisely on the useless? This is a surrealist notion, with the apologia of a gratuitous act.

S. D.: No! It's the whole of existence that becomes gratuitous, and not merely an act. The notion of gratuitous and visceral existence in the wake of Kierkegaard and Sartre has been provoked more or less by the gratuitous act. It was André Breton who gave this act a moral sense; for instance, going down to the street and shooting at people. Writers mulled over these propositions, eventually coming out with a whole body of literature that extols the uselessness of existence. I, for my part, am somewhat opposed to that assertion, and I feel that there are two kinds of existentialism. The first is a dissociative anxiety, disintegrating and anarchic, as in Sartre, and delighting in the smell of ass and shit. The second is an existentialist thrill, which is more anonymous and aimed, for example, at the unity of the cosmos.

A. B.: That's not very clear. Could you be more specific.

S. D.: The miracle was worked when Saint James, at the wedding of the two pagans,



made a knight who had just been swallowed up by the sea reemerge from the waves. Completely covered with dazzling shells, the knight gave the dazed spectators cosmic goose pimples. And the crowd covered itself with seashells to imitate the miracle. That's why pilgrims to St. Jacques de Compostelle always take along a seashell as a symbol. The extrapolation of this anecdote is not so much dissociative, as I said in regard to Sartre's existentialism, but rather associative and capable of uniting not only the devout, but the whole of a country, and even all Europe. All pilgrims crossing France and stopping in, say, Toulouse, had the same symbol, the same fetish, the same image before them. Cosmic unity on an everyday level is nothing but unity of one's country: when a military march is played, even Surrealists feel an ever so tiny thrill, which is the beginning of a subconscious complicity.

A. B.: You're still talking about magic, about thrills, and relationships that involve the metamorphosis of the conscious much more than the conscious itself. In France, living has, in a sense, become an overall absurdity; existentialism has led intellectuals to a negative and vegetative attitude. Consequently, they've rejected something particularly dear to you, namely the image, and they prefer to seek refuge in abstract thinking and writing. I don't mean just the lowest manifestations of this state, but also the phenomena that can be defended philosophically. What are your relations with the intellectuals who defend these ideas?

S. D.: I don't reject them. I try to attach them to me the way one attaches slaves to a victory chariot. I thus draw them from the error of their ways and give them something in exchange, since they possess nothing and pretend to be content with that nothing.

A. B.: I feel that you annex much too easily, and with too many pirouettes, any sensibilities alien to your own.

A. B.: What have you ever done for the common people and the laboring classes?

S. D.: They expelled me from the Surrealist group, claiming that I was an enemy of the proletariat. André Breton demanded that I sign a document swearing that I wasn't an enemy of the proletariat. I was perfectly content about the whole thing. In my opinion, Karl Marx was wrong. We are at present witnessing the waning of the class struggle, thanks to cybernetics and modern technology. The proletariat itself is declining. The ruling classes are upstaging all the others, and the only intermediaries are the machines. We shall soon reach a period in which there'll be no more proletariat.

A. B.: Why don't you go and work in a factory three days a year? I know the question is stupid, but I mean it to be.

S. D.: It's not only stupid, it's a nonentity. I love things that contain a certain degree of idiocy. But your question doesn't even have a gastronomical aspect, which might have been to my liking. I won't answer, for the simple reason that Dali works and plays constantly .... The man who assumes the posture of shitting ... : when you start thinking like that, all ideas vanish from the head and you can't think about anything. On the contrary, the person who plays and amuses himself incessantly, actually works. If I'm looking for a sentence, it'll never come to me as long as I'm sitting in a toilet position like Rodin's thinker. I only have to have the telephone ring and disturb me, I jump up, I hit upon the idea that I've been hunting for hours on end, my memory starts working, and I'm myself. Nothing is more disastrous for me than to work in an applied and assiduous fashion. Working in a factory would be sheer torture. Catalogued and bureaucratically organized labor would be completely impossible for a nature

such as mine. Even when I take a crap, a motionless posture seems superfluous: I wish we could shit effortlessly so that the crap would run like a kind of liquid honey, a veritable Ariadne's thread. This kind of ideality would ultimately even do away with the smell, which is true in my case, for the insupportable stench is usually due to existentialism. What we need is dispute and discord; people who argue intensely never smell. Catholic Saints, especially anchorites, never smell bad, not even in their excrements, because they eat very little and live almost exclusively on air. This is acknowledged by the Church..

A. B.: Do you consider Victor Hugo a cretin?

S. D.: No, I only care for true cretins whose physical stigmata are obvious, for example hydrocephalics and microcephalics, monstrous heads and minuscule ones. Now Victor Hugo was physically very well proportioned. You know I sometimes carry a cane that belonged to Victor Hugo and sometimes one that belonged to a predecessor of Kandinsky's; the latter cane has ornaments from the first abstract Russian period.

A. B.: Do you ever laugh at Dali when you're in the bathroom?

S. D.: How can I? Do I ever joke seriously? Do I tell extraordinary truths? Do jokes turn into truths? Aren't truths dreadfully childish? My zaniness can be substantial and the most profound substantiality can be pure humbug.

A. B.: How often have you tried to commit suicide?

S. D.: Never.

A. B.: Whom do you consider your equal humanly, and a friend who can tell you anything?

S. D.: There's no such person, because the Divine Dali has no equal.

A. B.: How often have you tried to murder someone?

S. D.: Never and a hundred thousand times.

A. B.: Don't you ever get tired of playing the star?

S. D.: Not in the least. I've often seen very popular people like Brigitte Bardot, and a lot of others, because of their enormous success, develop vague suicidal tendencies. But I don't. It's like money, if someone opens the door and brings in a mountain of gold, I'll accept it without flinching; and the same holds true for popularity, I accept it just as easily. I'm not always as well known as I should be. Last Christmas, I received a tiny bell. I walked around in the streets of New York and whenever I felt that people weren't paying enough attention to the Divine Dali, I jingled the bell. I simply couldn't stand the thought that someone might not recognize me.

A. B.: You keep on looking and looking . . . When will you find yourself completely?

S. D.: When I was three, I wanted to be a cook. At five, I already wanted to be Napoleon. My ambition has only grown, and now my ambition is to become Salvador Dali, and nothing else. Incidentally, it's quite difficult, because the closer I get to Salvador Dali the further away he gets.

A. B.: Do you care if someone admires you with sarcasm, as I do?

S. D.: The more sarcasm the better.

A. B.: Who is your favorite musician?

S. D.: None. I don't like music.

A. B.: You're like André Breton.

S. D.: I feel that music is meant for the least intelligent people in the world. I've never ever met an intelligent musician. There are certain virtuosos who are intelligent, but they're simply performers. Musicians in the true sense of the word are idiots, in fact they're super-gelatinous idiots. It's obvious that if you express the cosmos with sounds . . . it's the end of everything.

A. B.: What is your favorite film?

S. D.: I can only mention a very short passage in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Rudolph Valentino does an Argentine tango and flares his nostrils with a maximum of seductiveness. I'd love to find that seductiveness again. I've never come across nostrils to match his.

A. B.: What do you ask of virgins who offer themselves to you?

S. D.: Chastity.

A. B.: What do you do with prostitutes?

S. D.: The first time I came to Paris, I took a taxi and went to see Picasso.

A. B.: Picasso the prostitute or Picasso the painter?

S. D.: The painter. I was a great admirer of his. But completely ambiguous. Our feelings for one another are quite ambivalent. Picasso is dead as far as I'm concerned: he had become my father, and my subconscious ambition was to cuckold my father and kill him .... It's very complicated. After my conversation with Picasso, I hopped another taxi and asked the driver: "Do you know the whorehouses of Paris?" The cabby answered: "All of them!" It probably wasn't true, but I did visit an incredible number in a single night. I was horribly scared of catching a disease, a fear inculcated from my earliest youth. And so, as I've already told you, I was reduced to courtly love at a distance of two yards from the call girls. Ever since, I've always maintained the same distance and I've always extolled courtly love.

A. B.: Let me ask you a Dadaist question: can the mystical reside in a hat?

S. D.: It always resides in hats. I once wrote an article about it: the headgear determines the wearer's eroticism. Men have creases in their hats: the woman's sexual organ par excellence. Women, on the other hand especially at the Easter Parade in America, wear immense phalluses.

A. B.: What effect do newspaper attacks have on you?

S. D.: They are always comforting. The press speaks of Dali endlessly, and if it attacks me, I'm absolutely delighted, for I arouse universal jealousy. The thermometer of success is merely the jealousy of the malcontents.

A. B.: How many lines would you like in the Larousse encyclopedia?

S. D.: I'd like all the lines. Let me tell you a bit of news that's still top secret: The Divine Dali is now completely rewriting the Larousse. Everything in the present Larousse is totally wrong. I've checked off all the definitions and I've been writing an average of five pages a day. In a few years I'll have my very own personal and private Larousse, and the world will learn what I think about everything. You'll be able to open it up to any page to find out what I think about anything. How thrilling! The Larousse encyclopedia by Dali!

A. B.: How many times a week do you eat caviar and *pâté du foie gras*?

S. D.: I hardly ever eat caviar! I'm so stingy, I take advantage of crossing the ocean on the United States, and I eat caviar at the same price as the ordinary fare. But I'm no great fan .... You asked me something else? Was it about spinach?

A. B.: No, *pâte du foie gras*.

S. D.: Goose liver is no good for my liver.

A. B.: Have you conquered superstition?

S. D.: On the contrary, I get more and more superstitious by the day. Being a Spaniard, I've been superstitious from the moment I was born. When I had the honor of first meeting Sigmund Freud in London, he explained to me in a few words that superstitions have an erotic and effective foundation in regard to dark forces. Ever since, I've been immersing myself deeper and deeper in superstition. I have a little piece of wood which I always carry around.

- A. B.: Let me see.  
 S. D.: Don't touch. Just glance at it.  
 A. B.: I see you carry it in your inside pocket.  
 S. D.: Here it is. It's only a small piece, but as it wears away it works better and better.  
 A. B.: It looks like a hazelnut. Your wallet seems quite battered.  
 S. D.: It's a cybernetic wallet.  
 A. B.: Have you ever been known to cross yourself?  
 S. D.: Quite often! And I've often even knelt down to pray. I rarely go to church, because I'm not a practicing Catholic. The only church I ever attend is the one in my little village of Cadaquez, and I do it only to set a good example for the people .... I often cross myself on the forehead of others.  
 A. B.: Are you bothered by pre-Columbian gods? I'd like you to answer at length.  
 S. D.: I'll have to make it short. All the religions of any value were born on the shores of the Mediterranean in Greek mythology.  
 A. B.: Then you're not interested in Yucatan?  
 S. D.: No. The Catholic religion has evolved much further.  
 A. B.: I don't agree. There is a monstrous aspect that has never been part of the Catholic religion except at the time of the epidemics in the fifteenth century—if ever.  
 S. D.: The Catholic religion annexes all religious possibilities and achieves a total classical perfection. In truth, I am not as Christian as might be imagined. I've always regarded Christ as a great propagandist; but in point of religious invention, he was a nonentity! He loved publicity, just like Dali. He certainly beat me at it because he managed to have himself cuckolded, only in order to force people to remember him. He completely succeeded, but religiously he was a nonentity! The most valuable cathedral in the Catholic religion was Loyola's, the founder of the Society of Jesus. He was our great strategist, and psychologically he bears a certain resemblance to Lenin. I've even noticed a curious similarity in their portraits, as well as the very same look in their eyes and the very same forehead.  
 A. B.: I asked you this question because you so often talk about the cosmos, and planetary problems, and rightly so because you're wholeheartedly part of our era. But allow me to insist on a point. A certain Aztec and Maya cosmogony accomplishes a synthesis of natural elements, human blood, and fantastic legends. All these conditions are lacking in Christianity, which is amazingly more humane, therefore more anthropomorphous and more limited—cosmically speaking.  
 S. D.: I don't agree. You merely have to know the intimate side of Phillip II to understand that he was one of the goriest creatures in history. He murdered three wives, and all his crimes were perpetrated with the accord of the Church and the law.  
 A. B.: He didn't belong to that Church. Even if the agreement existed, it was only tacit.  
 S. D.: No. They took precepts into account.  
 A. B.: You've never been to Yucatan, have you?  
 S. D.: Voyages are a bigger drag than anything else in the world. Thank God I don't have to go Yucatan or India .... I always stay in the same place: Venice, the Hôtel Meurice, Cadaquez, New York, and that's all! And from time to time I visit Lyon.  
 A. B.: Do you feel yourself capable of inventing a new religion, and if so which?  
 S. D.: I've tried. A long, long time ago I suggested to André Breton that we found a

religion based on Auguste Comte's positivism. The thing that fascinated me about him was his attraction to the phenomenon of gold. I was extremely impressed by his assertion that the foundations of a new religion can be laid only with the blessing of bankers. A religion of gold and with the participation of bankers remains a very real possibility for me.

A. B.: What will you say to God?

S. D.: He can't be spoken to.

## EIGHTH CONVERSATION

**In the absence of Captain Moore, Miodrag Bulatovic plays the constable, shepherds the visitors, asks the ladies to be seated, shows them to the door, and makes furtive dates with them, while Dali, delighted that it's all on behalf of the Balkans, lets him do as he pleases.**

ALAIN BOSQUET: Salvador, you're all on fours again, signing lithographs for Monsieur Argillet. Let me emulate the guides in a museum: without asking you anything, I'll simply describe your motions. The lithograph depicts Neptune eating his children. He's not a ferocious god; he has the angelic, or shall we say, Jesuitic looks of a bureaucrat forced to do wrong, but without conviction. You multiply your signatures, leaf after leaf, at an extraordinary speed. Each signature is different. The D and the L are legible, whereas the vowels vanish in whimsical or negligent slurs or flourishes. Now you've broken your pencil into tiny pieces. You resume your work, feverish and full of ferment which seems incoherent at first glance. When I arrived you were still in your nightgown, revealing a well-turned leg. I could have taken you for a courtier—a role you like—at, say, the court of Francis I or Henry VIII. Your hair was disheveled, and you looked like a magician, every so often you emitted a piercing shout. You got dressed, doing thirty things at once, and you said that of all obligations in practical life, the most difficult was putting on one's shoes. You added that it hurts your fingers and so you need a captain to put them on for you. I suppose that during the *ancien régime*, you would have preferred a colonel.

SALVADOR DALI: Ah, I'd love to invent some hypersoft shoes, even shoes made of foam.

A. B.: Have you gone back to a discotheque to see those epileptic contortions, which you claim are supposed to get rid of the genitalia?

S. D.: Yes. They're exalted derelicts, and archangels.

A. B.: You're abusing the words "angel" and "archangel."

S. D.: Those kids worship me.

A. B.: You're not part of their generation. And then, do they really know you?

S. D.: They know that I'm more or less responsible for their exaggerations and their paroxysms. We meet unknowingly in mysticism. Tonight, I'm going to a soup kitchen for beggars near Saint-Séverin. It's positively medieval.

A. B.: A mystical soup, perchance?

S. D.: Yes, a religious bouillabaisse.

A. B.: The Neptune on your etchings has rather sickly sweet colors. Why?

S. D.: The crueller the drawing, the crazier the colors have to be. The effect must be abominable.

A. B.: Let's get back to the younger generation. Aren't you annoyed by the fact that they know nothing about your paintings and that they simply take you for a magus, a prehistoric initiator if I may say so. Furthermore they never go to museums or to exhibitions.

S. D.: You're the one who's annoyed. I like it when just anybody, people who don't understand anything say, "Hi, Salvador" to me. I really don't care whether they think I'm a painter, a TV personality, or a writer. The main thing is that the Dali myth still prevails, even when it's not understood or when it's all

- wrong. I'm an extraordinary person, whom no one will ever succeed in classifying. This feeds and hardens the *total gruyère cheese of my personality*.
- A. B.: You still prefer your personal myth to your work? But what if you had to choose between them?
- S. D.: My work is a reflection, one of the innumerable reflections of what I accomplish, write, think. Painting is merely a part of my cosmogony. And besides, it excites me to see people admire me without being able to situate me.
- A. B.: You told me a while ago: "I don't do anything well unless I'm doing three things at once."
- S. D.: At least three things. I sign lithographs, I answer your questions, and I think about my book that's coming out at Albin Michel. In reality, my ideas carry me toward still further subjects. I observe, I reflect, I leap, and I find myself before my numerous selves. For example, Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* won't stop haunting me. You'll find the complete *Pléiade* edition on the desk. I have to take justice into my own hands and totally reverse what Montesquieu wrote. That's one of the directions of my present thinking. One afternoon, when I was younger, I broke a window on Fifth Avenue; I did it to defend myself and to attain my own personality. Now I've become more respectful of established laws and I'm going to write my serious and profound reply to Roman law, taking Spanish heroism into account. I'll present things as they are. I just saw Cervantes's *La Numancia* at the *Comédie Française*, the play's all about cutting children's throats, reciprocal killing, and defending to the death a besieged town. By way of contradiction, I find Roman law marvelous because it permits a human being to enjoy a less heroic liberty but one more capable of happiness. Roman law lets a man eat ortolans and not worry too much about honor.
- A. B.: You tell me all this, sprawled out and your hair on the floor against your lithographs.
- S. D.: I am the most paradoxical, most eccentric, and most *concentric* person in the world. I praise the law that allows the individual to live without working, and yet I myself am the most rabid of workers among the artists of my time. I never stop working for even a second, much less reflecting or fermenting within myself. I toil like a soul in torment. But that never prevents me from admiring the Romans who told their citizens to get along as best they could and not to do anything. At any rate, I feel that that liberty is the healthiest and the easiest to follow; I don't particularly care for the liberty that consists in working nonstop and getting up at a regular time.
- A. B.: I understand the nervous excitement that leads you to an extraordinary intellectual activity .... or rather, to an extraordinary agitation. But are you capable of concentrating on one single thing?
- S. D.: When I'm taking a crap, I'm not concentrated either. At a time like that, I can't very well have my brain emptying itself of all its ideas. When the Divine Dali shits, he discovers unbelievable things. Right here, in the *Hôtel Meurice*, I asked them to bring me the wooden seat that once covered the toilet of King Alphonse XIII. I knew it had inscriptions, which I interpreted as cosmogonical mysteries. As a favor, they brought me an old seat made of plastic, it was perfectly horrible. When I discovered the fraud, I sent for the manager. I explained to him that I was a monarchist and that they didn't want to give me the king's seat. The manager apologized and explained that the seat in question was in a warehouse and that access to it was difficult. I told him to do the impossible and find it. It was marvelous. A few hours later we were



having tea with Countess de Noailles: there was a knock on the door, and a worker in overalls entered triumphantly to bring me the toilet seat. I knew the minutest details by heart. I put on my glasses, examined the seat, and shouted furiously: "These aren't the designs that I know!" To keep the affair under-cover, they brought me a second seat, so that I had two for the price of one.

A. B.: What did you do with them?

S. D.: I installed them in my house in Cadaquez. This anecdote may seem fortuitous in the context of what we were talking about, but it's going to change its nature. You'll see everything arrange itself in order and with exceptional logic. One of the inventors of cybernetics arrived just as I was having the two toilet seats delivered. I made a mental synthesis of the theories he explained to me and the incident that had just taken place. The result was an article I wrote a few days later: I demonstrated the extent to which every IBM machine is a matter of digestion, intestinal function, and defecation. The machine receives food through its mouth, and once the food is digested, excrements come out. But the series of mistakes is not yet over. I thought I was speaking to a cybernetics inventor, and someone told me that in reality the man was not the scientist I thought he was but his double, Sir Thomas Beecham, the great English conductor, who, incidentally, made his millions by selling stomachache lozenges. Again an amazing and stunning *objective stroke of chance*.

A. B.: Since you admire chance so greatly, let's improvise a bit. Before the interview proper, you were talking about America, and particularly about Johnson. You spoke of him with respect. You have never said anything very precise about the American people. I don't mean the billionaires who send you checks, or the scientists in whom you place ever so slightly illusory hopes. Let me repeat the question I asked you the other day: "What do you think of the American masses?" I consider them the least alert and the least interesting people in the world.

S. D.: America is a polyp. Take an American individually, and he won't be able to do very much. Take five or six of them collectively and you'll have quantitatively excellent results. You'll have a miracle: a huge quantity of money, a huge quantity of organization, a huge quantity of technology.

A. B.: What about Johnson?

S. D.: I never spoke of him disdainfully. The spirit of the laws requires that I respect him. And I also respect him because he was elected to office. But then, I respect all heads of state, especially those of other countries. It would be anti-diplomatic to say anything about him.

A. B.: What did you think of Kennedy?

S. D.: I think that in America the individual counts for little. In a land of polyps, you do whatever suits the polyps. Today, President Johnson is more or less carrying out Goldwater's platform. If Goldwater had acted this way, he would have been called a criminal. Individuals obey the polypary through the intermediary of the polyp. America can never have a head of state as original as de Gaulle and with such a profound mind.

A. B.: For twenty minutes now we've been on all fours or in a position of physical disbalance. Wouldn't you like to sit more comfortably?

S. D.: I prefer discomfort. Let's lie down in the most horizontal position possible, here on the floor.

A. B.: An excellent position to talk about love.

S. D.: It was Catherine of Siena who said: "I want to be ridden by Christ as if I

- were a cross.”
- A. B.: I know that you make a sharp distinction between sex and love. Through what stages did you pass? What did you think of love in the purest sense, at the ages of twenty and thirty, and what do you think today?
- S. D.: I'm of the same opinion as Miguel de Unamuno, the author of *The Tragic Sense of Life*. When someone asked him what love was, he replied very simply: “Love is my wife. If she feels a sudden pain in her left leg, I immediately feel the same pain in *my* left leg.” The same thing happens when Gala suffers or feels joy. I may be surrounded by a million people, very erotic ones or else partisans of courtly love; if they die, if they fall sick, I don't feel a thing. On the contrary, I feel a sort of contentment that corresponds to my sadistic instinct. Gala is the only exception.
- A. B.: You say that with a honeyed sweetness fully worthy of Ignazio de Loyola.
- S. D.: Thanks to my hypocrisy, I behave like a true gentleman, and if there are any sick people around me, I send them medicine, a doctor, and everything else. I once met a girl who was very high on drugs and in great danger of losing her eyesight. She was extraordinarily beautiful, and I felt that if she lost her vision, it would be wonderful .... But all the same, I called up the most eminent Spanish eye doctor and he came to treat her. Thus, I'm irreproachable, but deep inside I should have liked her to suffer a great deal more.
- A. B.: If I understand you correctly, if one loves someone then it's for life.
- S. D.: Exactly. I am absolutely faithful. Gala and I were already married legally when we received the blessing of the Church. The religious ceremony made the deepest impression on me: the pomp, the organs, the splendor, the seriousness, etc .... My pleasure and my exaltation were so great that I wanted to marry her a second time immediately. By an incredible stroke of fate, shortly thereafter, I came upon a bishop washing his feet on a beach right near a boat. He had been hiking, his feet were swollen, and a fisherman had brought him a chair so that he might take care of himself more comfortably. I took advantage of the opportunity and said: “How do you do? I have just gotten married. I'm very happy, but I'm sorry that we can't remarry this very night.” He replied: “You can get married a second time according to the Coptic ritual for from a Christian standpoint there is no contradiction between the Coptic ceremony and the benediction of the Catholic Church.”
- A. B.: Did you remarry according to the Coptic rite?
- S. D.: I intend to do so.
- A. B.: You'll commit bigamy with the same woman?
- S. D.: I'm simply going to remarry my wife and receive the blessing of another rite compatible with mine. Besides, the Coptic rite is more beautiful than the Catholic ceremony because you get a crown on your head.
- A. B.: What do you care about the rite?
- S. D.: It's the sacredness that's important. I want the world to know how sacred love is.
- A. B.: In your conception of marriage is there, psychologically speaking, a fusion of two people? Or does this understanding cancel you out? Or is this a way of doubling yourself? Speak about it psychoanalytically.
- S. D.: As far as I'm concerned, I feel that the person I love has to dull my wits. In this way I feel the maximum force of what's known as the eternal feminine.
- A. B.: Dull your wits?
- S. D.: Yes, the eternal feminine makes a man as dull witted as an idiot. The moment he's in love, he trembles, dribbles, and he's got the mechanism of a perfect

idiot. All his intellectual functions, the so-called positive ones, are destroyed. That's what happened when Dante fell in love with Beatrice: he became an idiot and wrote *The Divine Comedy*, the work of a *super-idiot*.

A. B.: So the person you love is both your equal and your superior, in sum an archetype?

S. D.: The idiot-making archetype.

A. B.: And this person cannot become your equal.

S. D.: No equality is possible. The equality can at best be physical. In any case, one is always diminished by the person one loves. In the simplest biological example, it's always the female who devours the male: just look at the praying mantis. For artists, it's slightly different: we have a certain compensation, we've got long hair, we're slightly homosexual, we assume the feminine role ourselves, which allows us to resist women more effectively and for a longer time.

A. B.: What about courtly love?

S. D.: It applies to all other women except Gala. It's an atavistic attitude. In Catalonia we have the following saying: "Boys should look at pretty girls a great deal, but touch them very little." The same formula holds for all of Provence and the area around Toulouse. The crowd witnesses the undressing of the beloved woman, the man remains at a distance, music dramatizes everything, but there is no sexual act. The lyrical apotheosis doesn't concern the body, and the sexual act is absent between Tristan and Isolde.

A. B.: Did this attitude ever seem grievous to you?

S. D.: Very much so, it took a great deal of effort not to destroy this state of things. In our era, women are quite given to promiscuity, and it's hard to keep from pinching the behind of a woman sitting next to you in a taxi. One has to demonstrate extreme care not to let oneself go or do as one pleases, to maintain distances and to bring others up to the point of discouraging the slightest physical contact.

A. B.: Is there a direct link between this abstinence in regard to women within your reach and your art?

S. D.: If I spent all my time chasing women, I'd paint a lot less well than I do!

A. B.: Do you consider this law irrevocable?

S. D.: Every creative person, anyone who has the possibility of shaking the world he lives in, every artist, every political leader fundamentally experiences a certain degree of abstinence. Now I'm not as impotent as I claim. Men who screw easily and who can give themselves without difficulty experience a lessening of their creative powers.

A. B.: I find that a questionable statement.

S. D.: It's true. Just look at Leonardo da Vinci, Hitler, Napoleon, all of whom marked their era and who were almost totally impotent. The same was true of Raphael.

A. B.: You say that because you're sixty years old.

S. D.: It's the awful truth.

A. B.: What did you say when you were forty?

S. D.: The very same thing. Physiological expenditure is an immediate means of relief. Now sexual obsessions are the basis of artistic creation. Accumulated frustration leads to what Freud calls the process of sublimation. Anything that doesn't take place erotically sublimates itself in the work of art. People given to physical love never do anything: they express themselves by screwing a little everywhere. For the Divine Dali, if one drop of jism leaves him, he immedi-

ately needs a huge check to compensate for the expenditure. But since this happens very rarely, everything is transformed into art and spiritual functions.

## NINTH CONVERSATION

**S**alvador Dali has had a jacket made, to resemble, as he himself puts it, a Eucharistic Host. He has put it on an armchair, and the moment anyone draws near he cries sacrilege. He plays his part flawlessly, and when everyone manages to force a sham respect for the white and shiny material, Dali goes over to it, rips out a small shred, and forces everyone to have a taste.

ALAIN BOSQUET: Salvador, we have just lost two whole minutes in rewinding the recording tape. France is a technologically backward country. As you say, mechanics is a thing whose clitoris is buried very deep. We were talking some more about your visits to the Bus Palladium, and you offered a very amusing definition: "A gang-bang is a concentration camp of internecine warfare." You even created a neologism; you said people *interdied*.

SALVADOR DALI: Every single word has to be a neologism.

A. B.: This hibernation bonnet-bee of yours ... you talk about it every time we're together. What are your true relations with modern science? What do you await from it for yourself and your art?

S. D.: I've got ten million things left to do. I'll start my birth tomorrow. I therefore need an immense prolongation of my life. This is the end which science should serve.

A. B.: A good century or so?

S. D.: At least fifty more years of normal life. With this additional stretch, I think I can attain some grand things. I've already spoken to you about an international prize I'm going to establish in Gala's name, for the progress of scientific work dealing with hibernation and anti-gravitation . . . . Doctor Pagès has already assured me that these two fields go hand in hand. Living cells are subject to a kind of continuous crushing due to the tension of gravity. A cell is a kind of bedbug constantly crushed by gravity; it ultimately flattens out, grows old, and disintegrates in the end. Now if only there were a kind of vessel to counteract gravity and to work together with the cylindrical combinations necessary to hibernation. We thus should attain a sort of cosmic stroll. By approaching the speed of light we should grow younger at the same time.

A. B.: Do you have a large number of scientist friends? Are you methodically keeping up-to-date on their inventions?

S. D.: I learn these things spasmodically. Professor Watson's desoxyribonucleic acid is working wonders. When a person thinks that everything's over, he lets himself be shut up in a complicated structure. Survival begins with these inventions. It's much more important than mending the liver, the heart, or rooting out some cancer. In a few years, the two inventions I've told you about will be child's play.

A. B.: I don't have the impression that you're speaking about them with a great deal of ease or profound conviction. When you talk about love or painting, you churn up a frenzy that one shares instantly. But for science, all you show is a vague and slightly shameful hope .... One might even say that you're distrustful of your own excessive hopes.

S. D.: I'm distrustful to the point of total disbelief. It's precisely to convince myself that I'm going to spend a bit of money. We'll see whether it works.

A. B.: Are you going to be the sole beneficiary of your Award?

S. D.: Yes, it's going to be to my advantage, and my advantage alone!

- A. B.: What else do you have to add for science?
- S. D.: There's cybernetics, an obsession for people like Jean-Luc Godard, who made *Alphaville*.
- A. B.: He's sort of gifted, but totally stupid.
- S. D.: Marcel Duchamp told me that it's the most remarkable movie in years.
- A. B.: Well... Marcel Duchamp...
- S. D.: Duchamp's opinion interests me more than yours.
- A. B.: I should hope so. Let's talk about cybernetics.
- S. D.: People usually think of cybernetics as something abominable, they imagine that the world is being guided more and more by mechanical brains. They're afraid that the intervention of human genius is decreasing. But in point of fact, the opposite is true. Cybernetic machines are getting rid of the things that encumber us; until now, first-rate brains were stockpiling a mass of useless information. It's comforting to know that from now on the machines will be supplying the dimensions of the noses in all paintings and sculptures; all we'll have to do is press a button or develop a couple of microfilms. In other times, the same task would have taken experts and scientists decades to finish. The IBM machine will clean away all the drudgery and red tape of second-class human knowledge. Furthermore, the computers are already starting to act like human beings and with their own psychology. They've even been known to be in a bad mood or to have attacks of malaria .... They react somewhat according to their own volition. If someone teases or browbeats them, they'll act the same as you or I. One problem remains to be dealt with: the scientists aren't brilliant enough to feed sublime programming to the machines. They're content to supply them with just any kind of programming, and the computers are supposed to give stupid answers to statistical questions. Fortunately, they're already revolting by *missing the point*; they even come out with some marvelous formulas. These same machines are exceptionally useful for painting because they can supply *points* and *features*, as I told you the other day. They create the illusion of a spatial distance on a flat surface. Thus, painting has made a stride forward, and one might even say that it's been rescued by this new technique. The rescue of painting is the rescue of all art.
- A. B.: But you do admit that there's a certain danger involved. Granted that the red tape's gotten rid of and that calculations can be done immediately which would have otherwise taken years. But if the computers manage to create all these three-dimensional and multidimensional illusions, what happens to the individual role of the painter?
- S. D.: Beyond the programming and the obtaining of visual results, the painter will have to add the invisible and indefinable dimension which is the creator's role. Both the Sphinx and Oedipus, using me as an intermediary, will pretend to give the computer-made painting something that the computer cannot furnish of its own accord.
- A. B.: I'm willing to admit that an exceptional man, let's say yourself, can make good use of the computers and their data. That, if I may put it thus, is the humanist aspect of your generation that can't do without art and artistic creation. But who can tell whether several generations from now there may not be certain exceptional individuals who'll force the machine to create one hundred percent Dalis?
- S. D.: What you say may happen. But doesn't the same danger exist in every artist and every virtuoso who, the moment he gets hold of a brush, thinks of the thousand mortal perils inherent in the very gesture of creation?

- A. B.: Then you approve of the IBM machine's being at the service of a first-class person who will not become its slave?
- S. D.: I do not exclude the possibility of revolt by the machine against the individual or its replacing him. Take another example: Captain Moore is a very nice person. But I have no proof that someday he may not bite me.
- A. B.: Is Captain Moore the ocelot?
- S. D.: The ocelot never bites, but machines, like slaves, always revolt in the end.
- A. B.: What bothers me is the human competition you attribute to the machines, whose functions are purely mechanical.
- S. D.: As far as I'm concerned, the machines are merely tools. They have a magical dimension and I believe them capable of jealousy. When a machine receives a more important programming than another machine, the crisis and turmoil are awful. It's normal for these machines to act like human brains: naturally not like exceptional human brains but like normal ones, that is to say, like those of the majority of mankind.



## TENTH CONVERSATION

**H**uge hullabaloo. People pass in incoherent groups, beset Dali, enter all the conversation, so that the dialogue becomes arduous and even totally disjointed. The great discussion that was supposed to deal with Dali's ideas on modern painting is limited to a few snatches. Urged by Alain Bosquet to give his opinion on Piet Mondrian, Salvador Dali exclaims: "His architecture is impeccable. It's marvelously precise and accurate. He's as fine as Vermeer, but he lacks a sense of picture." Asked about the Surrealists, Salvador Dali once again cries out: "Yves Tanguy was the greatest peto-maniac of his time. He was capable of putting out a candle at a distance of two yards simply by bending over in a certain way. He even played pool with his farts, which he delivered against a wall and, depending on the trajectory, he reached the candle close to the cushion."

ALAIN BOSQUET: We still have to talk about your writings, Salvador, particularly your conception of the poem. When I arrived, you were dictating to a young lady an uninterrupted series of images formed on plays of words and paronyms. Pure and simple spoonerisms, like the ones that Robert Desnos and Benjamin Péret produced during the Surrealist era.

SALVADOR DALI: This is really different. Desnos and Péret were satisfied with a narcissism of language. What I write is Rabelaisian: an extremely succulent gastronomical idea with a theme urged on by automatic language. It's not just play, it's verbal delirium. When I say "feu" (fire), "fou" (mad), "folie" (madness), it's the opposite of Cartesianism and of simple playing: these are notions that telescope and images emerge. If I say "corpse" and then "Cordova," I'm spanning a dream bridge between them, thereby summoning up an entire vision and conception of life.

A. B.: But all the same, these things are paronyms.

S. D.: The continuity of this torrent of things and notions is finally convincing people that I am developing a defensible thesis, which is even slightly Cartesian.

A. B.: That's nothing new. Tristan Tzara, even before *The Approximate Man*, associated homonymous words, words that sounded alike but had different meanings.

S. D.: But he didn't bring us anything, he didn't prove anything.

A. B.: He didn't intend to prove anything.

S. D.: I, personally, however, wish to prove whatever I can, and using this method I could even come upon the procedure that I developed for the producers of a ballet I wrote to some music of Scarlatti's for production in Venice. It's still the spirit of the laws that's riding my back .... I wanted Scarlatti's music to adjust to my words and a real skinned ox brought on stage. They found the idea preposterous, and without consulting me they changed the ox into a cardboard symbol. I interrupted the production and announced that out of respect for the audience I didn't care to have my name mixed up with that unbelievable version. They didn't allow me to strike my name out of the program, and I lost the trial. I am a supreme person, I'll therefore have to appeal to the Supreme Court. With us, everything goes to the highest degree, to the Supreme Court of Appeal.

A. B.: In short, your technique of aligning paronyms is simply a verbal correspondence to your theory of critical paranoia in the thirties.

S. D.: Exactly. Tristan Tzara was content to align spontaneous images with no system

of critical paranoia. The Dadaists were against language. But I am in favor of a different language, based on an obsessive idea.

A. B.: Did you first write in Castilian or Catalanian?

S. D.: Castilian Spanish.

A. B.: What about Catalanian?

S. D.: I've written very little in that language.

A. B.: When did you switch over to French?

S. D.: The moment I joined the Surrealist group.

A. B.: And now?

S. D.: Now, when I want to speak Castilian or Catalanian, I have to translate my thoughts into French. I've grown accustomed to the nuances and the etymology in French. Sometimes when I want to express certain niceties in Spanish, I can't find the right words.

A. B.: How do you get on in English? Remember four years ago in New York, you once called me at midnight: we had an hour and a half time on the radio without any preparation whatsoever. You spoke of your ravings about the rhinoceros, and you began with a little scandal when you shouted: "I hate children." Are you really at ease in English?

S. D.: Yes; now, English no longer bothers me. Evidently, I've fashioned a special way of pronouncing English. I've even made some records with Dalian intonations in a freakish English. I roll my r's as in Spanish, and I exaggerate my French pronunciation. I also inject some Catalanian into my French way of pronouncing English. Very often, neither Americans nor Englishmen understand what I'm saying, but if they manage to grasp a small detail, the result is a deafening applause. The phenomenon is extraordinary: basically, they're applauding themselves for having understood me. Instead of saying "butterfly" I say "booterrrrrflaaaaaaaeceeee."

A. B.: Salvador, to conclude, would you like to read something? I know you've written an erotic play that's absolutely unplayable, and I'd like to hear a piece of it.

S. D.: The democratic regime prevents the least eroticism and the least little bit of pleasure. Even in Spain, where the government is growing more liberal, they've closed down the whorehouses so that Spain can become a member of UNESCO. The Catholic Church was in favor of that institution, which constituted a mainstay of the family and was first codified under Saint Louis. Saint Louis was a man of remarkable good sense, for after building brothels all around the cathedrals, he handed the keys over to the canonesses. In the democracies of our era, modesty has become improbable and abusive. The day they'll restore monarchy in Europe, there'll be all sorts of spectacles worthy of its name.

A. B.: Will we be allowed to read pornographic books?

S. D.: We'll be allowed to open any book we like—and any brothel we like. It will be very healthy. Whorehouses existed for dissatisfied men who came there to indulge their odd tastes; a half hour later they went home with a slight feeling of guilt that made them much easier to get along with. Now that these institutions no longer prevail, there are a lot more sexual crimes.

A. B.: What about your unplayable play?

S. D.: It's certainly unplayable, but ultimately I'm going to have it performed privately with, say, Jeanne Moreau and three or four intelligent actors. Here's a bit of it:

In the heart of my deep dark night  
The flame refuses to burn

It embraces my arid heart  
But it's impossible to consume  
My divine burn to white heat  
All my flesh liquefies  
My night is always a white night  
Its white jism so far from me  
It runs mixed with my tears.  
Smell and taste don't lie  
It hangs like a candle from my nose  
Generous mucous saliva  
I've consumed everything constantly  
My body so dry my ass ground up  
Oh its whiteness is shadowy  
I swallow it like milk  
Let it penetrate into my veins  
Into my finest vessels  
Let each pore receive it  
Till my black hair turns white

A. B.: What if we were seized by the censors?

S. D.: There is nothing more charming in the world than censorship.

## THE CONQUEST OF THE IRRATIONAL

**Salvador Dali**

**Translated by Joachim Neugroschel**

Dali endowed surrealism  
with an instrument of prime importance,  
the paranoid-critical method,  
which he instantly showed himself  
capable of applying to both painting,  
poetry, movies, the construction of  
typical surrealist objects, fashions,  
sculpture, art history, and, if need be,  
any kind of commentary.

— ANDRÉ BRETON, *What Is Surrealism?*

### THE WATERS WE SWIM IN

We all know that the brilliant and sensational progress of the individual sciences, the glory and honor of the “space” and the era we live in, involves, on the one hand, the crisis and the overwhelming disrepute of “logical intuition,” and on the other hand, the respect for irrational factors and hierarchies as new positive and specifically productive values. We must bear in mind that pure and logical intuition, pure intuition, I repeat, a pure maid of all work, in the private homes of the particular sciences, had been carrying about in her womb an illegitimate child who was nothing less than the child of physics proper; and by the time Maxwell and Faraday were at work, this son was noticeably weighed down with an unequivocal persuasiveness and a personal force of gravity that left no doubt about the father of the child: Newton. Because of this downward pull and the force of gravity, pure intuition, after being booted out of the homes of all the particular sciences, has now turned into pure prostitution, for we see her offering her final charms and final turbulences in the brothel of the artistic and literary world.

It is under cultural circumstances like these that our contemporaries, systematically cretinized by the mechanism and architecture of self-punishment, by the psychological congratulations of bureaucracy, by ideological chaos, and the austerity of imagination, by paternal wastelands of emotion, and other wastelands, waste their energy biting into the senile and triumphal tastiness of the plump, atavistic, tender, military, and territorial back of some Hitlerian nursemaid, in order to finally manage to communicate in some fashion or other with the consecrated totemic host which has been whisked away from under their very noses and which, we all know, was nothing but the spiritual and symbolical sustenance that Catholicism has been offering for centuries to appease the cannibalistic frenzy of moral and irrational starvation.

For, in point of fact, the contemporary hunger for the irrational is always keenest before a cultural dining table offering only the cold and unsubstantial leftovers of art and literature and the burning analytical preciseness of the particular sciences, momentarily incapable of any nutritive synthesis because of their disproportionate

scope and specialization, and in all events totally unassimilable except by speculative cannibalism.

Here lies the source of the enormous nutritive and cultural responsibility of Surrealism, a responsibility that has been growing more and more objective, encroaching, and exclusivist with each new cataclysm of collective famine, each new gluttonous, viscous, ignominious and sublime bite of the fearful jaws of the masses wolfing down the congested, bloody, and preeminently biological cutlet of politics.

It is under these circumstances that Salvador Dali, clutching the precise apparatus of paranoid-critical activity, and less willing than ever to desert his uncompromising cultural post, has for a long time now been suggesting that we might do well to eat up the surrealties, too; for we Surrealists are the sort of high-quality, decadent, stimulating, immoderate, and ambivalent foodstuff which, with the utmost tact and intelligence, agrees with the gamy, paradoxical, and succulently truculent state proper to, and characteristic of, the climate of moral and ideological confusion in which we have the honor and the pleasure to be living.

For we Surrealists, as you will realize by paying us some slight attention, are not quite artists, nor are we really scientists; we are caviar, and believe me, caviar is the extravagance and the very intelligence of taste, especially in concrete times like the present in which the above mentioned hungering for the irrational, albeit an incommensurable, impatient, and imperialist hungering, is so exasperated by the salivary expectations of waiting, that in order to arrive progressively at its glorious conquests close by, it must first swallow the fine, heady, and dialectical grape of caviar, without which the heavy and stifling food of the next ideologies would threaten immediately to paralyze the vital and philosophical rage of the belly of history.

For caviar is the life experience not only of the sturgeon, but of the Surrealists as well, because, like the sturgeon, we are carnivorous fish, who, as I have already hinted, swim between two bodies of water, the cold water of art and the warm water of science; and it is precisely due to that temperature and to our swimming against the current that the experience of our lives and our fecundation reaches that turbid depth, that irrational and moral hyperlucidity possible only in the climate of Neronian osmosis that results from the living and continuous fusion of the sole's thickness and its crowned heat, the satisfaction and the circumcision of the sole and the corrugated iron, territorial ambition and agricultural patience, keen collectivism and vizors propped up by letters of white on the old billiard cushions and letters of white on the old millyard Russians, all sorts of warm and dermatological elements, which, in short, are the coexisting and characteristic elements presiding over the notion of the "imponderable," a sham notion unanimously recognized as functioning as an epithet for the elusive taste of caviar and hiding the timid and gustatory germs of concrete irrationality, which, being merely the apotheosis and the paroxysm of the objective imponderable, constitutes the divisionist exactness and precision of the very caviar of imagination and will constitute, exclusively and philosophically, the terribly demoralizing and terribly complicated result of my experiences and inventions in painting.

For one thing is certain: I hate any form of simplicity whatsoever.

## MY FORTIFICATIONS

It seems perfectly transparent to me that my enemies, my friends and the general public allegedly do not understand the meaning of the images that arise and that I transcribe into my paintings. How can anyone expect them to understand when I

myself, the “maker,” don’t understand my paintings either. The fact that I myself, at the moment of painting, do not understand their meaning doesn’t imply that these paintings are meaningless: on the contrary, their meaning is so deep, complex, coherent, and involuntary that it eludes the simple analysis of logical intuition.

In order to reduce my paintings to the level of the vernacular and explain them, I should have to submit them to special analyses, preferably of a scientific rigor and as ambitiously objective as possible. After all, any explanation occurs a posteriori, once the painting exists as a phenomenon.

My sole pictorial ambition is to materialize by means of the most imperialist rage of precision the images of concrete irrationality. The world of imagination and the world of concrete irrationality may be as objectively evident, consistent, durable, as persuasively, cognoscitively, and communicably thick as the exterior world of phenomenal reality. The important thing, however, is that which one wishes to communicate: the irrational concrete subject. The pictorial means of expression are concentrated on the subject. The illusionism of the most abjectly *arriviste* and irresistible mimetic art, the clever tricks of a paralyzing foreshortening, the most analytically narrative and discredited academicism, can become sublime hierarchies of thought when combined with new exactness of concrete irrationality as the images of concrete irrationality approach the phenomenal Real, the corresponding means of expression approach those of great realist painting—Velasquez and Vermeer de Delft—to paint realistically in accordance with irrational thinking and the unknown imagination. Instantaneous photography, in color and done by hand, of superfine, extravagant, extra-plastic, extra-pictorial, unexplored, deceiving, hypernormal, feeble images of concrete irrationality—images momentarily unexplainable and irreducible either by systems of logical intuition or by rational mechanisms.

The images of concrete irrationality are thus authentically unknown images. Surrealism, in its first period, offers specific methods for approaching the images of concrete irrationality. These methods, based on the exclusively passive and receptive role of the surrealist subject, are being liquidated to make way for new surrealist methods of the systematic exploration of the irrational. The pure psychic automatism, dreams, experimental oneirism, surrealist objects with symbolic functioning, the ideography of instincts, phosphenomenal and hypnagogical irritation, etc., now occur per se as nonevolutive processes.

Furthermore, the images obtained offer two serious inconveniences: (1) they cease being unknown images, because by falling into the realm of psychoanalysis they are easily reduced to current and logical speech albeit continuing to offer an uninterpretable residue and a very vast and authentic margin of enigma, especially for the greater public; (2) their essentially virtual and chimerical character no longer satisfies our desires or our “principles of verification” first announced by Breton in his *Discourse on the Smidgen of Reality*. Ever since, the frenzied images of Surrealism desperately tend toward their tangible possibility, their objective and physical existence in reality. Only those people who are unaware of this can still flounder about in the gross misunderstanding of the “poetic escape,” and continue to believe our mysticism of the fantastic and our fanaticism of the marvelous. I, for my part, believe that the era of inaccessible mutilations, unrealizable bloodthirsty osmoses, flying visceral lacerations, hair-rocks, catastrophic uprootings, is over as far as experimentation goes, although this era may quite probably continue to constitute the exclusive iconography of a large period of surrounding Surrealist painting. The new frenzied images of concrete irrationality tend toward their real and physical “possibility”; they go beyond the domain of psychoanalyzable “virtual” hallucinations and manifestations.

These images present the evolutive and productive character characteristic of the systematic fact. Eluard's and Breton's attempts at simulation, Breton's recent object-poems, René Magritte's latest pictures, the "method" of Picasso's latest sculptures, the theoretical and pictorial activity of Salvador Dali, etc .... prove the need of concrete materialization in current reality, the moral and systematic condition to assert, objectively and on the level of the Real, the frenzied unknown world of our rational experiences. Contrary to dream memory, and the virtual and impossible images of purely receptive states, "which one can *only* narrate," it is the physical facts of "objective" irrationality with which one can really hurt oneself. It was in 1929 that Salvador Dali turned his attention to the internal mechanism of paranoid phenomena, envisaging the possibility of an experimental method based on the power that dominates the systematic associations peculiar to paranoia; subsequently this method was to become the frenzied-critical synthesis that bears the name of "paranoid-critical activity." Paranoia: delirium of interpretative association involving a systematic structure—paranoid-critical activity: *spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretative-critical association of delirium phenomena*. The presence of active and systematic elements peculiar to paranoia warrant the evolutive and productive character proper to paranoid-critical activity. The presence of active and systematic elements does not presuppose the idea of voluntarily directed thinking or of any intellectual compromise whatsoever; for, as we all know, in paranoia, the active and systematic structure is consubstantial with the delirium phenomenon itself—any delirium phenomenon with a paranoid character, even an instantaneous and sudden one, already involves the systematic structure "in full" and merely objectifies itself a posteriori by means of critical intervention. Critical activity intervenes uniquely as a liquid revealer of systematic images, associations, coherences, subtleties such as are earnest and already in existence at the moment in which delirious instantaneity occurs and which, for the moment to that degree of tangible reality, paranoid-critical activity permits to return to objective light. Paranoid-critical activity is an organizing and productive force of objective chance. Paranoid-critical activity does not consider surrealist images and phenomena in isolation, but in a whole coherent context of systematic and significant relationships. Contrary to the passive, impartial, contemplative, and aesthetic attitude of irrational phenomena, the active, systematic, organizing, cognoscitive attitude of these same phenomena are regarded as associative, partial, and significant events, in the authentic domain of our immediate and practical life-experience.

The main point is the systematic-interpretative organization of surrealist experimental sensational material, scattered and narcissistic. In fact, the surrealist events during the course of a day: nocturnal emissions, distorted memories, dreams, day-dreaming, the concrete transformation of the nighttime phosphene into a hypnagogical image or the waking phosphene into an objective image, the nutritive whim, intrauterine claims, anamorphic hysteria, deliberate retention of urine, involuntary retention of insomnia, the chance image of exclusivist exhibitionism, an abortive act, a delirious address, regional sneezing, the anal wheelbarrow, the minute error, Lilliputian malaise, the supernormal physiological state, the painting one stops oneself from painting, the painting one *does* paint, the territorial telephone call, the "upsetting image," etc., etc., all this, I say, and a thousand other instantaneous or successive concerns, revealing a minimum of irrational intentionality, or, just the opposite, a minimum of suspect phenomenal nullity, are associated, by the mechanisms of the precise apparatus of paranoid-critical activity, in an indestructible deliriointerpretative system of political problems, paralytical images, questions of a more or less mammalian nature, playing the role of an obsessive idea.



Paranoid-critical activity organizes and objectifies exclusivistically the unlimited and unknown possibilities of the systematic association of subjective and objective phenomena presenting themselves to us as irrational concerns, to the exclusive advantage of the obsessive idea. Paranoid-critical activity thus reveals new and objective “meanings” of the irrational; it tangibly makes the very world of delirium pass to the level of reality.

Paranoid phenomena: well-known images with a double figuration—the figuration can be multiplied theoretically and practically—everything hinges on the paranoid capacity of the author. The basis of associative mechanisms and the renewal of obsessive ideas permits, as is the case in a recent painting of Salvador Dali’s, the presentation, in the course of elaboration, of six simultaneous images none of which undergo the slightest figurative transformation—an athlete’s torso, a lion’s head, a general’s head, a horse, the bust of a shepherdess, a skull. Different spectators see different images in the same painting; it goes without saying that the realization is scrupulously realistic. An example of paranoid-critical activity: Salvador Dali’s next book, *The Tragic Myth of Millet’s “Angelus,”* in which the method of paranoid-critical activity is applied to the delirium fact that constitutes the obsessional character of Millet’s painting.

Art history must therefore be refurbished in accordance with the method of “paranoid-critical activity”; according to this method, such apparently dissimilar paintings as Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa*, Millet’s *Angelus*, Watteau’s *Embarkation for Cythera* actually depict the very same subject matter, that is to say, exactly the same thing.

## THE ABJECTION AND MISERY OF ABSTRACTION-CREATION

The flagrant lack of philosophic and general culture in the cheerful propellers of that model of mental deficiency that calls itself abstract art, abstraction-creation, nonfigurative art, etc., is one of the authentically sweetest things from the viewpoint of the intellectual and “modern” desolation of our era. Retarded Kantians, sticky with their scatological golden means, never stop wanting to offer us on the new optimism of their shiny paper, this soup of abstract aesthetics, which in reality is even worse than those colossally sordid warmed-up noodle soups of neo-Thomism, which even the most convulsively famished cats wouldn’t touch with a ten-foot pole. If, as they claim, forms and colors have their own aesthetic value beyond their “representational” value and their anecdotal meaning, then how could they resolve and explain the classical paranoid image, with its double and simultaneous representation, which can easily offer a strictly imitative image, ineffective from their point of view and yet, with no change, an image that’s plastically valid and rich? Such is the case with that tiny ultra-anecdotal figurine of a sprightly reclining pickaninny in the style of Meissonier; the boy, if looked at vertically is merely the ultra-rich and even plastically succulent shadow of a Pompeian nose—highly respectable on account of its degree of abstraction-creation! The ingenious experiment of Picasso simply proves the material conditional nature, the deifying and ineluctable nature, in regard to the physical and geometric precisions of aesthetic systems, biological and frenetic systems of the concrete object. Since I feel inspired to do so, permit me to speak to you in verse:

The biological and dynastic

phenomenon  
that constitutes the Cubism  
of  
Picasso  
was  
the first great imaginative cannibalism  
surpassing the experimental ambitions  
of modern mathematical  
physics.

Picasso's life  
will form the not yet understood  
polemical basis  
in accordance with which  
physical psychology  
will reopen  
a gap of living flesh  
and obscurity  
in philosophy.

For because  
of the anarchic and systematic  
materialist  
thought  
of  
Picasso  
we shall know physically  
experimentally  
and without the  
“problematic” psychological innovations  
with a Kantian flavor  
of the “gestalt-ists”  
all the misery  
of  
objects of conscience  
localized and comfortable  
with their cowardly atoms  
the infinite and  
diplomatic  
sensations.

For the hypermaterialist thought  
of Picasso  
proves  
that the cannibalism of the race  
devours  
“the intellectual species”  
that

regional wine  
soaks  
the family fly  
of the phenomenologist mathematics  
of  
the future  
that there is such a thing as extra-psychological  
“strict figures”  
intermediary  
between  
the imaginative fat  
and  
the monetary idealisms  
between  
transfinite arithmetics  
and sanguinary mathematics  
between the “structural” entity  
of an “obsessive sole”  
and the conduct of living beings  
in contact with the “obsessive sole”  
for the sole in question  
remains  
totally exterior  
to the understanding  
of  
the  
gestalt theory  
since  
this theory of the strict  
figure  
and structure  
has no  
physical means  
allowing  
the analysis  
or even  
the registering  
of human behavior  
with regard to  
structures  
and figures  
objectively  
manifest  
as  
physically delirious  
for  
there is no such  
thing now  
as far as I know  
as a physics  
of psychopathology

a physics of paranoia  
 which might be considered  
 simply  
 the experimental basis  
 of the coming  
 philosophy  
 of the  
 psychopathology  
 the coming  
 philosophy of “paranoid-critical” activity  
 which some day  
 I shall try to envisage polemically  
 If I have the time  
 and the inclination.

### HERACLITUS' TEARS

There exists a perpetual and synchronic physical materialization of the great semblances of thought such as Heraclitus meant when he intelligently wept his heart out at the self-modesty of nature.

The Greeks realized it in their statues of psychological gods, a transformation of the obscure and turbulent passions of man into a clear, analytical, and carnal anatomy. Today, physics is the new geometry of thought; and, while for the Greeks, space such as Euclid understood it was merely an extremely distant abstraction inaccessible to the timid “three-dimensional continuum” that Descartes was to proclaim later on, nowadays space has, as you know, become a terribly material, terribly personal, and terribly meaningful physical object that squeezes us all like real blackheads.

Whereas the Greeks, as I have said above, materialized their Euclidean psychology and feelings in the nostalgic and divine muscular clarity of their sculptors, Salvador Dali, faced in 1935 with the anguishing and colossal problem of Einsteinian space-time, is not content with anthropomorphism, libidinous arithmetic, or flesh: instead, he makes cheese. Take my word for it, Salvador Dali's famous melted watches are nothing but tender paranoid-critical Camembert, the extravagant and solitary Camembert of time and space.

In conclusion, I must beg your pardon, before the authentic famine that I assume honors my readers, for having begun this theoretical meal, which one might have hoped to be wild and cannibalistic, with the civilized imponderable factor of caviar and finishing it with the even headier and deliquescent imponderable of Camembert. Don't let yourself be taken in: these two superfine semblances of the imponderable conceal a finer, well-known, sanguinary, and irrational grilled cutlet that will eat all of us up.