Salvador Dali: Artistic Style And Creative Process

Salvador Dali is one of the greatest surrealist artists who changes the art world with his unique style and innovative concepts. Dali in real sense is a creative genius and a precocious artist influenced by metaphysics and cubism. Dali transforms his dreams and fantasies into fascinating and ground breaking which are open for conflicting interpretation by the viewers. He introduces concept of paranoiac critical method which refers to the use of subconscious to improve the creativity. He uses the concept of illusion to convey complex messages and demonstrates the ingenuity and novelty in his artwork. Dali is a creative genius who incorporates science in his art and draws series of work based on principles of science. Dali is a unique but at times eccentric personality who draws attention with unusual attire and behaviour. He is not only a great artist but mysterious and a philosopher who contributes a lot to the surrealist movement by his great artwork and thinking . The use of illusion in art, concept of the paranoiac critical method of using subconscious thinking in art, incorporating science in art and unique, complex and creative personality for are the subjects of further discussion in this essay.

Illusions are noted as a disconnect between physical reality and subjective perception (Martinez-Conde and Macknik 2013) Salvador Dali perfects this concept and creates a number of truly superb artworks to challenge the viewer's perception of reality. He uses the concept of ambiguous illusions where the subject produces contradictory perception as illustrated in Old Age, Adolescent, Infancy (Oil on Canvas 1940), Disappearing images (1939) and so many others. In the first painting he stimulates our brain to perceive the visual stimulation of two opposing images of a fisherwoman and the stages of life to create a sense of ambiguity. In the second painting he creates confusion in our mind by challenging our brains to make a sense of the artwork. Dali uses concept of illusion to make us to see the double images of the same subject, and he is way ahead of his contemporaries in this regard. He understands the unique ability of our brain to interpret the visual stimulation in a disorderly manner from partial or interrupted information. Dali is a genius in creating an image within an image and with this the subject can be interpreted with two different meanings. He uses the concept illusion to create complex images and asks the viewers a question and challenges them for their interpretation. His constant use of illusion in an artwork to blur the distinction between fact and fantasy, a hallmark of surrealist movement (Martinez-Conde S 2015) has been exemplified in many of his famous paintings. The ability of brain to fabricate links among things that are in reality unconnected is essential to the "paranoiac-critical method" artistic method invented by Dali. (Martinez-Conde S 2015). Dali shows his ability to create multiple images in a single work and this demonstrates the creativity of his visual cortex to perceive more than one image from the single stimulus.

Paranoia is a complex psychotic condition with no hallucination and without a personality disorder resulting in a complex delusion. Dali is known for introducing the concept of paranoiac critical method in the early 1930s by which he allows his paranoid state to create paintings and artworks with optical illusions and multiple images. This has been a great creative contribution by Dali to the surrealist movement. Dali asserts that "the moment is at hand when, by a process of a paranoiac and active character, it is possible (simultaneously with automatism and other passive states) to systematize confusion and thus help to discredit completely the world of reality" (Finkelstein 1975). He externalizes the "systematize confusion" in to art work away

from world of reality. In painting “Suburbs of the Paranoiac-Critic City he fantasizes about his wife and transform her anatomy in grapes and horse and skulls in series of sketches. He feels that any subject has minimal meaning, but the visual stimulus perceived by the brain results in multiple images sometimes unrealistic and confusing. Dali claims that through a deliberate simulation of paranoia, anyone engaging in the paranoiac- critic method would be able to demonstrate that a reality is not a fixed entity to which an individual responds but rather a construct born out of that individual comprehension of the world (Greeley 2001). The Weaning of Furniture Nutrition (1934) is another example of Dali’s work based on this theory. In this work he shows the back of a lady who probably is a nurse sitting on the beach. There is an odd collection of items around her such as wine bottles, side tables and boats. The back of the lady is propped up by a crutch. There is no relation between the subjects and the objects and probably results from the subconscious thinking of Dali. It is assumed that Dali’s painting of the 1930’s exhibit and active paranoiac delirium, but it is also possible to consider them as reflecting some of Dali’s preoccupations but utilising images that are undivided from Dali’s fundamental mode of seeing (Finkelstein 1975).

Dali is one of the rare artist who transforms contemporary science in his art from the very early stages of his creative life. He studies scientific journals and his library is full of books on physics, quantum mechanics, the origin of life, evolution and mathematics. He makes meticulous notes after reading the books and uses this information for his creative art. Dali uses the principles of science in early 1930s and produces series of paintings like Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion (1930, Paranoiac Face 1935 and Endless Enigma in 1938). These paintings show the creative genius of Dali using the principle of optics. He moves from one aspect of science to the next and produces innovative work with great understanding of science. He is greatly disturbed by the Hiroshima atomic bomb and produces a famous work “Uranium and Atomica Melancholica Idyll” (1945) (Dine 2015). It shows a fighter place dropping bombs in the middle and the yellow flames showing the explosion. The most interesting part is the black background representing the hopelessness and the depressing feeling of mankind. Following this catastrophic event, he uses atoms and nuclear fusion in his artwork during the 1940s and 50s. He blends religion and scientific imagery, intellectually driven by Dali’s belief that complex subatomic structure of the universe argues for the existence of a higher creator (Gott 2009). He produces a painting of the DNA molecule as a part of his appreciation of Watson and Crick and names the work GALACIDALACITESOXIRIBUNUCLEICE- ACID (1963). He combines the name of his wife Gala and DNA together in his work (Guardiola 2003). Dali moves from atom to DNA, stereoscopic physics to catastrophe theory and all of these scientific facts are incorporated in his work as he moves.

Dali is a creative genius, an excellent artist, film producer, costume designer and a thinker but has a complex personality. He comes out as a person with unpredictable behaviour, eccentric and a publicity seeker who tries his best to keep himself in the spotlight all the time. Dali does not believe in discipline and is constantly disturbed by his desires and conflict in his life. It is difficult to describe his behaviour in exact wording, but Dali describes many of these traits in his autobiography (The Secret Life 1993). He describes about many dreams with vivid clarity and to the last detail and childhood hallucinations. He feels quite disturbed with these thoughts throughout his life. Dali shows a great interest in psychology and admires the work of Sigmund Freud and goes to meet him. Dali describes his visits to a psychiatrist but denies any psychiatric issues (The Secret Life p.25). He creates a cologne with foul smell by mixing goat manure and fish glue and justifies his creation with odd explanation. Dali has a ferocious attitude for the art of self-promotion and appears tirelessly willing to emphasise the same message wherever he

goes (Murphy 2009). There is no better way of describing Dali's behaviour other than by his own quote "There is only one difference between a mad man and me. I am not mad" (Gibson, The Shameful Life p.628). There is relationship between creativity and psychopathology, and it has been reported up to 35% in great painters (Karlsson 2009). Many of his behavioural traits like odd dressing sense, covering a car with grass and taking his anteater pet in the subway are possibly relates to some underline psychopathology. Dali and his contribution to the history of art is a perfect example for highlighting the fact abnormality is not necessarily disagreeable, or to be so readily dismissed as a sign of a neurological disease (Murphy 2009). Dali's behaviour can be criticised for its oddity but not at the cost of his creative genius.

He is an extraordinary artist with multifaceted talent who evokes admiration for his work and criticism for his behaviour. His childhood is stressed by the early death of his mother and brother and an authoritative father. Dali is an active member of the surrealist movement but interestingly is expelled from same movement from his perceived fascist thinking. He is one of the very few artists who is not afraid to express himself and writes about his interesting and conflicting life experiences with no fear of ridicule. Dali is a great thinker and philosopher who describes the paranoiac critical method of drawing. He is one who can transform the scientific theories into art to produce many thought-provoking paintings on this subject. He manages to keep himself in the news all the time with his eccentricity, bizarre behaviour and particular dressing code. No doubt he is talented and unique if not genius. "Every morning upon awaking I experience a supreme pleasure: that of being Salvador Dali, and I ask myself, wonderstruck, what prodigious thing will he do today, this Salvador Dali?"- Salvador Dali.