

# A Psychoanalytic Study of Psychosexual Signs in Dali's Adaptive Paintings of Dante's *Divine Comedy*

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## Abstract

The aim of the present study is to compare *Inferno* in Dante's *Divine Comedy* with Salvador Dali's selected paintings. The researchers seek to find differences, similarities, reflections of Freud's psychoanalytic theories, and analyzed the symbols and signs in Dali's paintings. *Inferno* in Dante's *Divine Comedy* consists of thirty-four cantos from which the current study has selected images that illustrate the differences, similarities, psychoanalytic theories of Freud, and symbols in Dali's paintings. The research method of the present study is analytical-comparative method which has used the American school of comparative literature in analyzing the above examples. The corpuses of the current study include Dante's *Inferno* and Dali's adaptive paintings. This study addresses *Inferno* in that it inspired Dante in the form of dream, and it is the product of the unconscious mind. On the other hand, Dali's Paintings have been explored because he, as a surrealist painter, portrayed the dreams and the unconscious in his works. The major finding includes the similarity between Dali's focused on the human's unconscious and psychosexual symbols in his paintings with Dante's employment of the unconscious in *Divine Comedy*, as well as the impact of this medieval work on modern art.

## Keywords

Dante's *Inferno*; Salvador Dali; Sigmund Freud; Psychosexual Symbols; Oedipus Complex; Electra Complex.

## 1. Introduction

One of the oldest fields of literary research is comparative literature in which literary works from two different languages and nationalities were compared with each other and one was considered influential on the other and finally the similarity between two works or authors was introduced as research findings. In comparative literature we are confronted with two great schools of French and American (Nojoumian 116). The French school was formed in the early twentieth century in which the impressiveness and

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influence between different nations and cultures are considered and a researcher examines literary themes and the ways in which they are transferred from one culture and nation to another culture and nation. The American school was formed after World War II and was founded by René Wellek. In the American school, the impressiveness and influence between different nations and cultures on each other and language differences between two works are not compared, but the main criterion is nationality and culture, and researchers of comparative studies go beyond national and ethnic boundaries. The American school considers literature as a general and universal issue and distances itself from historical relations, impressiveness and influence of literary works, and approaches literary criticism. The American school, in fact, deals with the aesthetics of literary works and literary analysis. Comparative literature has an interdisciplinary nature that pays more attention to the study of the relationship between fine arts and other disciplines of the humanities (Bozorg Chami 142).

As noted, comparative study no longer merely refers to differences and similarities, but uses a literary and critical approach as methodology. Psychoanalytic approach in art, especially in adaptation, not only uncovers the hidden layers of humans' unconscious but also reveals the artist's intention of imagery and state of mind. In the current study by analyzing Dali's adaptive paintings of Dante's *Inferno*, the unseen purposes of Dali are discovered particularly in paintings that are totally different from Dante's descriptions of *Inferno*. By using psychoanalytic approach in comparative study, observers can understand desired messages of the artist that are conveyed through the artist's specific symbols and techniques. On the other hand, this study has highlighted the differences and similarities between two works, Dante's *Inferno* and Dali's adaptive paintings. In the present study, Freud's psychoanalytic approach was used in the comparative study of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Salvador Dali's paintings.

### 1.2. *Divine Comedy* and the Power of Storytelling

Dante Alighieri was an Italian poet and writer who began writing *Divine Comedy* in 1308 and completed it by the time he died in 1321. Dante's *Divine Comedy* was divided into three major sections: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, the trilogy in which Dante explained his imaginary journey in this book. *Divine Comedy* is one of the first books of Italian literature and it is usually considered as one of the greatest works in world literature. On this imaginary journey to the afterlife world, Dante is accompanied by two guides; in *Inferno* and *Purgatory*, Dante is guided by the Roman poet Virgil, who lived centuries before Dante, and in *Paradise* Dante is guided by Beatrice, who Dante fell in love with ("The Divine Comedy"). Dante himself called the book just a *Comedy*, but in the sixteenth century it was given the title of *Divine*, which means that this work is related to the supernatural and celestial world. *Comedy* means a work that has a folk

style and, unlike a tragedy, begins with bad events and ends with a happy ending. *Divine Comedy* is a masterful poetic work and Dante not only created his country's greatest literary work, but also established the language of Italy. Dante's poems in this book are so coherent that no word can be transposed or deleted from it and also this book is a mysterious and symbolic work that is full of allegory and metaphor which indicate its distinctive feature. The *Divine Comedy* shows the power of Dante's storytelling, and the way he narrates the events is such that, from the beginning, the reader forgets what is being read is only the imagination of a poet. Another distinctive feature of the *Divine Comedy* is that throughout it the myths of ancient Greece and Rome are intertwined with Christian beliefs and the old and new events have come together and turned this book into a universal work that belongs to all human beings, not only to specific thought, religion and country (Shafa 33-36).

### 1.3. Dali's Psychosexual Images

Salvador Dali was a Spanish surrealist painter that was born on May 11, 1904 in Figueres, Spain. Dali was a skilled designer best known for creating captivating and imaginative paintings in surrealistic works. In the 1920s, he went to Paris and began interacting with artists such as Pablo Picasso and René Magritte, which led to Dali's first surrealist phase ("Salvador Dalí"). Surrealism is an artistic and literary movement of the twentieth century and is truly distinguished from other movements by the trend and inclination to seem as a complete system of thoughts and principles, whose essence is not described completely in literary and artistic expression, but in all respects, in order to offer a fuller interpretation of the world. In fact, surrealism finds out the world of unconsciousness, supporting the explanatory principle of the reliable records of irrational situations, such as dreams, spiritual automata, and psychopathic associations. Surrealism exists within human beings and significantly presents the dark sides of each individual (Nika 38).

Dali is best known for his 1931 painting *The Persistence of Memory*. The rise of the Spanish fascist leader Francisco Franco caused the artist's expulsion from the surrealist movement, but did not prevent him from painting ("Salvador Dalí"). The influential painters and intellectuals such as Picasso and Magritte introduced Dali to Surrealism and he continued this style in his paintings. Dali's paintings are related to three general themes: 1) the universe and human perception, 2) sexual symbolism, and 3) ideographic imagery. All of this experimentation led to Dali's first Surrealistic period in 1929. These oil paintings were small collages of his dream images. Dali was an avid reader of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories. Dali's greatest contribution to the Surrealist movement was what he called the "paranoiac-critical method", a mental and psychological exercise of accessing the subconscious to enhance artistic creativity. Dali would use the method to create a reality from his dreams and subconscious mind, so that mentally changing reality to what he wanted it to be and not necessarily what it was. For Dali, it became a way of life ("Salvador Dalí").

During Dali's time in college, he read one of Freud's early books, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In the book, Freud describes some symbols that may appear in dreams and offers interpretation of their meanings, as mentioned by Schultz and Schultz in *A History of Modern Psychology* (cited in Graves 23). Since then, these symbols, often sexual representations, can be seen in the artwork produced by Dali and the other surrealist artists (Lambirth cited in Graves 23-24). In fact, Dali had a special interest in Freud's writings and theories, and even before joining the surrealist movement, he began to read Freud's writings and theories as a student (Graves 24). Dali was strongly influenced by Freud and his theories, and not only components of Freud's theories appear in Dali's artwork, but some of his writings are similar to Freud's. Finally, in 1938, Dali had the opportunity to meet Freud in London (Lambirth cited in Graves 24). Dali believed that he had reached the secrets of the dream and the unconscious, and Freud had told him that in classical paintings he sought the elements of the subconscious, and in surrealist paintings he tried to find the elements of the conscious (Graves 24). Looking at the works of Surrealism, it is easy to see that some of Freud's main theories about the unconscious and dreams are very prominent, and this is especially true in Dali's paintings. Dali created works of art, both intentionally and unintentionally, that can be easily explained through application of psychoanalytic principles, as Schultz and Schultz mentioned in *A History of Modern Psychology* (cited in Graves 24). Surrealism in general is interested in psychoanalytic theories related to castration, anxiety, fetishes, and the bizarre subjects, and also focuses on gender, sex, and death (Graves 25). These subjects can be seen throughout the surrealist artworks that Dali produced. Dali was invited by the Italian government in 1950 to create images for Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Sorell and Rubin 5).

#### **1.4. Freud's Theory of Dream Interpretation**

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method in psychopathology. In personality theory, Freud deals with the structural nature of human personality and its developmental stages. At first, he divided personality into three parts: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious, but later in 1923, Freud revised the above theory and considered three fundamental aspects of human personality called id, ego, and superego, which stated by Schultz and Schultz in *Theories of Personality* (53-54). The id is the most basic aspect of personality and corresponds to the unconscious and includes the instincts, desires and wishes of the individual and seeks immediate pleasure. The id operates in accordance with what Freud called the pleasure principle. The ego is the rational governor of the personality and operates in accordance with the reality principle and unlike the id, it satisfies the demands and desires in accordance with social rules and regulations. The superego is the ethical principles and values that we acquire in childhood and we call this conscience. The superego judges our behavior

and acquires right and wrong ideas from the laws of society. It strives solely for moral perfection and can create guilt, praise, and punishment in a person. There is always a conflict between the id and the superego and ego can mediate effectively between the two, as cited by Schultz and Schultz in *Theories of Personality* (54-57).

Freud believed that dreams represent, in symbolic form, repressed desires, fears, and conflicts. So firmly have these emotions been repressed that they can surface only in disguised trend throughout sleep. In his approach of dream analysis, Freud identified two aspects of dreams: the manifest content, which refers to the actual events in the dream, and the latent content, which is the hidden symbolic meaning of the dream's events. For example, steps, ladders, and staircases in a dream represented sexual intercourse. Candles, snakes, and tree trunks indicated the penis, and boxes, balconies, and doors signified the female body. Freud warned that despite this obvious universality of symbols, many symbols are unique to the person undergoing analysis and could have an exclusive meaning for anyone else. Conflicts appear in the dream in a condensed and intensified form. Dream events seldom result from a single cause; any event in a dream can come from several sources, as explained by Schultz and Schultz in *Theories of Personality* (70).

In 1900, Freud published his famous book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which he introduced the theory of dream interpretation with respect to the unconscious mind and the Oedipus complex. In this book, Freud deciphers the dream and also important parts of Freud's main theories such as repression, censorship, sexual theory, and the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious are discussed in this book. According to Freud, in order to analyze a dream, each of these cases must be examined on the basis of dream characteristics, such as dream materials, purpose of the dream, and dream shaping mechanisms. Dream materials: a dream consists of elements that include images and narratives. According to Freud, these elements constitute the materials with which the process of dreaming makes the final product of the dream. In fact, we are faced with a system whose output is the dream and human psyche transforms the inputs, which make the dream materials, and creates dreams. For Freud, the main materials of dreams are the trivial events of the day before dreaming, childhood events, external and physical effects such as pain and so on. Purpose of the dream: the question is that what is the purpose of the processes that turn into a dream and what they want to achieve. Freud believed that all dreams are directed towards the fulfillment of a wish and are formed with the aim of fulfilling one's wishes, whether these are one's current wishes or the childhood wishes that have an important place in Freud's theories. Dream shaping mechanisms: the fulfillment of wishes or desires is not formed directly in the dream, but is combined with certain mechanisms and transformations. Freud points to some of these mechanisms, one of them is condensation. In condensation, several events, images or

words are combined into one image; the second mechanism is displacement which refers to the decentering of dream thoughts, in fact, it is the mechanism of censorship that evades the conscious which is dominated by our superego and forms the basis of Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. Freud believed that what constitutes the goal and the focus of the dream is marginalized, and the trivial events of life form its center so that the conscious does not become sensitive to it and allows it to pass the censorship. Hence, Freud distinguished between dream-thought and dream-content. The dream-content is what we see, while the dream-thought is the thought behind the dream which has a dream-like form and is imagined in a complex way. Freud explained all the above statements in his famous book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (280-310). For Freud, works of art and literature are the product of the unconscious mind and, like dreams, must be analyzed and examined because they are the key to accessing the unconscious. For this purpose, in the next part of the research, we examine Dante's literary work with Dali's works of art in a comparative study.

## **2. Psychosexual Symbols in Dali's Adaptive Paintings of *Inferno***

In this section, the researcher analyzed four cantos of Dante's *Inferno* based on psychoanalytic theories of Freud. In each canto, the researcher investigated the differences and similarities between Dali's adaptive paintings and Dante's *Inferno*. Each canto belongs to specific sinners and their punishments. First, all the descriptions of each canto were described according to Dante's explanations of *inferno* and then Dali's illustrations of each canto were indicated. The researcher compared the descriptions of *Inferno* with the related illustrations to point out the differences and resemblances between these two works. On the next step, the researcher revealed the reflections of Freud's psychoanalytic theories and psychosexual symbols in Dali's adaptive paintings of Dante's *Inferno* and made connections between the descriptions of each canto and Dali's paintings.

### **2.1. Melting Skeletons: The Blasphemers in the Seventh Circle**

Canto fourteen of Dante's *Inferno* belongs to the violence against God and is located in the seventh circle. In this canto, there are three groups: blasphemers, sodomites, and usurers. Blasphemers lie on their back, sodomites are moving continuously, and usurers crouching at the floor with purses that are embellished with their families' coats of arms and hanging from their necks. The ground in this canto is like a desert and these souls are condemned to be under the flakes of fire forever. The significant point here is that in comparison with Dali's painting of this canto, none of these descriptions can be seen and instead there is only a skeleton which seems to be melting. Dali's painting is entirely different from Dante's explanations. In the following section narrations and analysis of Dali's illustration are given. About this circle Dante says:

We arrived upon a plain, which from its bed rejecteth every plant; the dolorous forest is a garland to it. All round about, as the sad moat to that; there close upon the edge we stayed our feet. The soil was of an arid and thick sand. Of naked souls beheld I many herds, who all were weeping very miserably, and over them seemed set a law diverse. Supine upon the ground some folk were lying; and some were sitting all drawn up together, and others went about continually. O'er all the sand-waste, with a gradual fall, were raining down dilated flakes of fire, as of the snow on Alp without a wind (Alighieri 93-94)

In this circle, Dante and Virgil meet Capaneus<sup>1</sup>, who is lying on the ground. After crossing this scorching plain, Dante and Virgil reach a place where a small stream of bloody water rises from the heart of the forest. They also cross this area and reach the island of Crete. Virgil told Dante that there was a mountain in this island which was called Ida and used to have rivers and palm trees, but has now become a desolate and waterless place with no trees. In this mountain there is an old man whose head is fashioned of refined gold; arms and chest are made of pure silver; belly and thighs are made of brass; and feet are made of iron and pottery. This old man is a symbol of humanity and each part of his body represents a period in the history of the world. Pure gold symbolizes the golden age of the past, an era when man had not committed sin; silver symbolizes the gradual periods of human's decline; the iron foot symbolizes the Roman Empire; and the pottery foot, which has a weaker base, symbolizes the Roman Catholic Church and this old man relied more on it. This old man is crying and his tears are flowing all over his body except his head, and it is a manifestation of human mistakes and sins. These tears are flowing from the mountain, which indicate the fall and decline of mankind. The way in which this old man stands also has a special symbolic meaning, he stands on the island of Crete, where it is almost the junction of the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, and here it means the center of time; turning its back upon the East is the manifestation of the past and spatially represents the early descendants of religions; facing west is the symbol of future and spatially represents the Catholic Church. The pottery foot is a symbol of Catholic Church because Dante believed that the papacy was not strong enough to govern the world (Shafa 275-276).

In Dali's illustration (figure 1), the burning plain, rain of fire and the spirits of blasphemers that are sleeping on this burning plain cannot be seen. In this image there is a skeleton head that is soft, elongated and seems to be melting. This skeleton head evokes Dali's *Persistence of Memory* (figure 2). In this famous painting there are some melting clocks that represent the camembert of time, suggesting that the concept of time had lost all meaning in the unconscious world. These paranoid-critical images reflect

Dali's reading and absorption of Freud's theories of the unconscious and its access to the latent desires and paranoia of the human mind, such as the unconscious fear of death alluded to in this painting ("Salvador Dali Paintings, Biography, and Quotes"). In Dali's painting, instead of a clock, we see a skeleton which can be a symbol of eternity in our dreams and unconscious, since the skeleton is a symbol of death. In semiotics, the skeleton is a symbol of human death and immortality (Cirlot 298). As a matter of fact, the melting skeleton shows that man does not believe in death and immortality in his unconscious. Freud believed that immortality is institutionalized in the unconscious of all human beings which denies death and the passage of time has no meaning or function in our unconscious ("Freud on Death").

On the other hand, the color of this skeleton is golden, which can represent the head of an old man made of pure gold and is the manifestation of the golden age of the past, the period when man had not committed sin. In the image, we see that a series of teeth in this skeleton are broken and fallen out, which can be a symbol of the gradual periods of human's decline and fall. In Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a tooth falling out represents castration and feelings of powerlessness ("Teeth Falling out Dream: The Meaning and Interpretation"). In Dali's image, the right side of the skeleton face is elongated and placed on a crutch. In semiotics, especially in Dali's paintings, crutch stands for an immoral, hidden or shameful support; this is because the foot is a symbol of the soul, and an infirmity or mutilation of the foot is the counterpart of an incurable defect of the spirit (Cirlot 73). Crutch is also a symbol of human's disability and weakness in Dali's paintings ("It's in the Symbols: Salvador Dali"). Another analysis can be that the crutch in this image symbolizes the foot of the old man, which is made of pottery and represents the Roman Catholic Church, and since Dante believed that the papacy was not strong enough to govern the world, Dali probably wanted to show that the Catholic Church is weak and in need of support, so man's reliance on it will lead to destruction. Dante described that this old man has turned his back upon the East, which is the manifestation of the past and spatially represents the early descendants of religions, and facing west, which is the symbol of future and spatially represents the Catholic Church. But in Dali's illustration it is totally different, if we consider this skeleton as the old man, its location is almost in the middle of the picture, which according to Dante is the connection point of the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, which here means the center of time, but the face of the skeleton faces east, and its back faces west, which is in contrast to Dante's description, and can indicate that Dali did not believe in the future of the Catholic Church. In 1950, Dali declared that he was a Catholic but an unbelieving Catholic (Gott 8). The crutch in this image even can be a slingshot, which does not have a band and a small stone has been thrown from it and its shadow is to the east. Stone is a symbol of being, of cohesion and harmonious reconciliation with self and



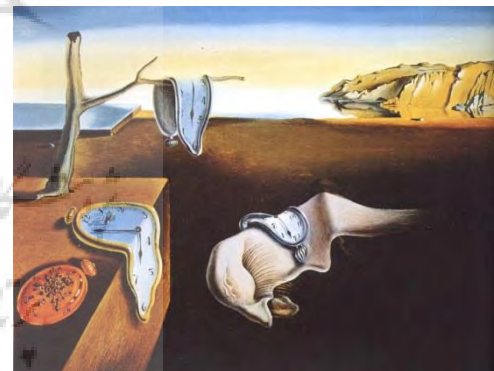
suggesting the antithesis to biological things subject to the laws of change, decay and death (Cirlot 313). So it can be said that the stone here signifies the meaninglessness of death. In Dali's image we can see a landscape of Port Lligat, the town on the Mediterranean coast where Dali spent much of his life. A similar scene can be seen in Dali's *Persistence of Memory* in which, according to Radford:

Certainly the bare, hard outline of the cliffs and the crystal light of the sky are there, but the empty, desert-like expanses of the painting are much closer to topography of the mind, to a dreamscape. The viewer's anxiety is fermented precisely through the lack of clues of distance, of recognizable landmark, of time of day, of temperature—it could equally be as hot, or as cold, as an unknown planet. We are in an arena of silence, a frozen nightmare, in which nothing moves or makes a noise (146)

This landscape in Dali's image of canto fourteen, in fact indicates the meaninglessness of death, time and place in our dreams and unconscious mind. In Dali's painting, we also see that the skeleton seems to be on a stair-like surface that is falling from it. In Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, stair represents sexual acts (Freud and Strachey 368). Maybe Dali, by drawing a falling skeleton from the stair, wanted to show that sexual desires cause human's fall.



**Figure 1. Canto Fourteen: The Blasphemers in the Seventh Circle**



**Figure 2. Dali's *Persistence of Memory***

## 2.2. Phallus and Anatomical Deficiency: The Sodomies in the Seventh Circle

In canto sixteen, there are spirits who must constantly move and the penalty for stopping for a moment is to sleep on the burning sands for a hundred years, and this group of wandering spirits is the eternal refugees of hell. Most of these spirits were artists and

celebrities, among whom can be found poets, sages, politicians, philosophers and bishops, who have committed the sin of sodomy with all wisdom. Dante described this canto as follows:

When shadows three together started forth, running, from out a company that passed beneath the rain of the sharp martyrdom. Towards us came they, and each one cried out: "stop, thou; for by thy garb to us thou seemest to be some one of our depraved city." As soon as we stood still, they recommenced the old refrain, and when they overtook us, formed of themselves a wheel, all three of them. As champions stripped and oiled are wont to do, watching for their advantage and their hold, before they come to blows and thrusts between them, thus, wheeling round, did every one his visage direct to me, so that in opposite wise his neck and feet continual journey made (Alighieri 104-105)

These three spirits are: Guido Guerra, a politician from Florence, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, a distinguished citizen of Florence, and Jacopo Rusticucci, a rich Florentine gentleman who had a sour and grumpy wife, which is why he hated women and fell in love with men. Dante considered all three to be sodomites (Shafa 294). In Dali's painting (figure 3) we see three naked figures that seem to be wheeling round. In this image, we see two males and one female, who had cut off her hand and held it above her head. The image of this woman can show Electra complex, and the hand that is elongated over the woman's head can be a symbol of masculinity. According to Freud, when girls find out that they do not have a phallus, they become angry with their mother for not giving them enough power. In Electra complex, since the little girl considers herself castrated, tends to take over the father and considers the mother as her rival, so she tries to alleviate her complex by having a man (Bressler 129). In this image, the hand that the woman is holding above her head can be a symbol of phallus that she had achieved.

Since Dali was strongly influenced by Freud, he used Freud symbols in his paintings. In this canto, Dante met three sodomies men, but in Dali's illustration there are two males and one female or a bisexual person. Perhaps Dali wanted to indicate Freud's theory of bisexuality. Freud believed that all human beings are bisexual, in other words, all human beings have aspects of both sexes and are sexually attracted to both sexes. For him, bisexuality can be physically, mentally, and psychologically and both homosexuality and heterosexuality are formed from this main bisexual tendency (Ruse 22). Freud stated that if in phallic stage the Oedipus complex in male children fails, the Oedipus complex will fixate the boy's identification with the mother, directing his libidinal cathexis onto the father and thus this negative result of the Oedipus complex in adulthood leads to homosexuality in men (Nicolosi 28-29). In Dali's image, we see the bodies of two men

who have very narrow and elongated waists and legs. By drawing these gay men, Dali wanted to show their physical and mental defects. In Dali's paintings, showing waist too thin, prolonged and facing feet intertwined with each other represent an emphatic anatomical deficiency (Dine 59).



**Figure 3. Canto Sixteen: The Sodomies in the Seventh Circle**

### **2.3. Syphilis Phobia: The Fraudulent in the Eighth Circle**

In canto eighteen, there are fraudulent, pimps and seducers who seduced women for the pleasure of others. The area of this canto is circular and surrounded by vertical and impassable rocks and encompasses ten concentric chasms. In the center of this area, there are some ditches that belong to each group of these souls. In this canto, these sinners have to walk and demons force them to move constantly by whipping. The demons are symbols of the corrupt nature of these sinners and the whips are symbols of their guilty conscience. These groups are punished by demons because they seduced women for pleasure of others and themselves. By a glance at Dali's painting of this canto, it can be understood that there is no relation between the painting and Dante's explanation of this canto. Instead of the sinners and their punishment, a weird creature is depicted that is absolutely far from Dante's observations. The analysis of this canto and Dali's illustration are described in details in the subsequent section. Dante says:

There is a place in Hell called Malebolge, wholly of stone and of an iron colour, as is the circle that around it turns. As where for the protection of the walls many and many moats surround the castles, the part in which they are figure forms, down at the bottom were the sinners naked; this side the middle came they facing us, beyond it, with us, but with greater steps (Alighieri 116-117)

In describing their punishment, Dante says: “this side and that, along the livid stone beheld I horned demons with great scourges, who cruelly were beating them behind” (Alighieri 117). In Dali’s painting (figure 4), there are no ghosts who are doomed to move in a ring and the demons whip the ghosts to move them. Instead, a creature is seen as if its head, trunk, and legs have become one and compressed. This creature is boneless and its bones have been removed and separated. Bone is a symbol of death and mortality, but they also represent permanence beyond death as well as our earthly passage. Somehow, bones signify our truest and barest self: they are the frame of our bodies (“Bones in Customs and Arts: A Brief Anthropology”). Since the flesh and bone are separated in Dali’s image, it can be a sign of flattery and seduction of these people. Whereas this canto belongs to the fraudulent and seducers, Dali’s illustration can be indicative of Freud’s theory of seduction. Freud’s seduction theory is based on traumatic sexual experiences in childhood, often involving family members and the seducer usually being an older male relative, typically the father, as quoted by Schultz and Schultz in *Theories of Personality* (48). In Dali’s image, the creature is an old man who can represent an elderly father and person seducing a girl or a boy. In this image there is a cavity below the nose of this creature which seems to be the mouth of this old man and its tongue came out of it. Mouth is a symbol of female’s genital which can represent a seduced girl, and the elongated tongue can be a symbol of male’s genital, a boy who has been seduced. In Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*, mouth is a symbol of female’s genital (“The Freudian Symbolism in Your Dreams”). Since Dali was strongly influenced by Freud, he used Freudian symbols in his paintings. On the other hand, the nose of this creature is long which can be a symbol of man’s genital. The crutch that is holding the nose of this creature, from which blood is flowing, can indicate weakness, impotence and fear of sexual intercourse. Crutch is a symbol of human’s disability and weakness in Dali’s paintings (“It’s in the Symbols: Salvador Dali”). Dali claimed that he was terrified of all sexual intercourses because in his childhood his father accidentally left a medical book about venereal diseases and their clinical symptoms on the piano, as a result of which Dali lost his interest in all traditional forms of sexual relationships and developed a syphilis phobia (Kovary 6).



**Figure 4. Canto Eighteen: The Fraudulent in the Eighth Circle**

#### 2.4. Castration Complex: Bertran de Born in the Eighth Circle

Canto twenty-eight belongs to the spirits of schismatics who have devoted all their efforts to separate people from each other and sowed discord between nations and family members. In this canto, there are three different groups of schismatics: those who have divided people religiously; those who have separated people politically; and those who have parted closed family members, such as father and son, and forced them to fight. Dante says: "Who ever could, e'en with untrammelled words, tell of the blood and of the wounds in full which now I saw, by many times narrating?" (Alighieri 183). About the punishment of these ghosts Dante says:

And one his limb transpierced, and one lopped off, Should show, it would be nothing to compare with the disgusting mode of the ninth Bolgia. A cask by losing centre-piece or cant was never shattered so, as I saw one Rent from the chin to where one breaketh wind. Between his legs were hanging down his entrails; His heart was visible, and the dismal sack that maketh excrement of what is eaten (Alighieri 184)

In general, the schismatics in this canto do not have any healthy bodies and some parts of their bodies are amputated in proportion to their crime. Since they have separated the nations, tribes and relatives, some parts of their bodies are cut off. In this canto, Dante talked to Bertran de Born, a French aristocrat who encouraged Prince Henry to rebel against his father, the King Henry II of England. Bertran de Born has been beheaded for creating discord between father and son. Dante says:

I truly saw, and still I seem to see it, a trunk without a head walk in like manner as walked the others of the mournful herd. And by the hair it held the head dissevered, hung from the hand in fashion of a lantern, and that upon us gazed and said: "O me!" (Alighieri 188)

In Dali's image (figure 5), only Bertran de Born is seen and the other spirits that Dante talked to are not seen in this image. By showing Bertran de Born, Dali may have wanted to illustrate Freud's splitting theory. In this theory, Freud referred to a mental process by which two separate and contradictory versions of reality could co-exist. Splitting can lead to polar simplification and classification, such as where an object is assigned as good or bad, rather than considered as something more complex. Freud described splitting of the ego as a defence mechanism that is associated with a defence in the face of a perception that traumatizes the ego, a perception partly accepted and partly denied at the same time, which leads, in the mind, to the coexistence of two

opposite attitudes. For Freud, the conflict occurs between the perception by the ego and the drive (Bokanowski and Lewkowicz 9). In fact, psychologically, the mind of Bertran de Born is divided into two parts and if the split-off mind is in a constant state of excitation, all the sensations in no less than one half of the body will be perceived only by the unconscious mind and this person only needs half of his mind (Smith 215). In Dali's image, we see that some parts of Bertran de Born's body are divided into two parts, such as his head and trunk, his head and nose, his buttocks which is divided into two parts, his chest and nipples, his patella and toes. This fragmentation could indicate splitting theory, the reason of this splitting in Bertran de Born is that he has separated the father and the son. Also, the separated pieces from the body can be a symbol of the son and the father. In the human body, the spinal cord is the main source of the brain and the head of Bertran de Born is a symbol of the son and his trunk is a symbol of the father (Moudarres 554). On the other hand, the cut-off head of Bertran de Born is a symbol of the phallus. In Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, head is usually a symbol of the phallus and the separated head indicates the amputation of the penis which is a symbol of castration (Carroll 63). In this illustration, Dali wanted to show the castration in Freud's Oedipus complex and by drawing a very thin waist and leg, he wanted to display the boy's shortcomings in the Oedipus complex and the fear of castration. In Dali's paintings, showing waist too thin, prolonged and facing feet intertwined with each other represent an emphatic anatomical deficiency (Dine 59).



**Figure 5. Canto Twenty Eight: Bertran de Born in the Eighth Circle**

### 3. Conclusion

Salvador Dali was a surrealist painter, who used this style to represent the subconscious and unconscious dreams and thoughts in his works. By this way, he has discovered the unconscious mind and the hidden dark aspects of man. In most of his images, Dali showed naked and bisexual bodies, especially with a very thin waist and elongated arms and legs. With these pictures, he wanted to indicate the fear and anxiety caused by males' impotence. In Dante's *Inferno* images, Dali combined his thoughts and dreams with the reality mentioned in the text in order to create a superior reality, the reality that deals with the hidden and dark aspects of human beings' repressed desires and needs, especially the sexual aspects. Since Dali was strongly influenced by Freud's theories, in some of his images of Dante's *Inferno*, he represented Freud's theories and views rather than the events mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*. In depicting Dante's *Inferno* images, Dali could not avoid using his personal interpretations and fantasies, which stemmed from Freud's theories, to discover symbols and he has somehow deviated from showing the events that Dante described. In most of his paintings, Dali illustrated the nature and instincts of humans and tried to depict the sins and weaknesses of man rooted in unconscious stimuli. In most of his images, Dali has used Freudian male and female sexual symbols. Dali was able to create powerful scenes in drawing images of *Inferno* that are somewhat in line with Dante's cantos.

### Endnotes

1. Capaneus was one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes (Alighieri, 2008).

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